

आधुनिक भारत के निर्माता

BUILDERS OF MODERN INDIA

**SARDAR PANIKKAR**

HIS LIFE AND TIMES

KONNIYLOOR R. NARENDRANATH

ਨਵ-ਭਾਰਤ ਦੇ ਨਿਰਮਾਤਾ

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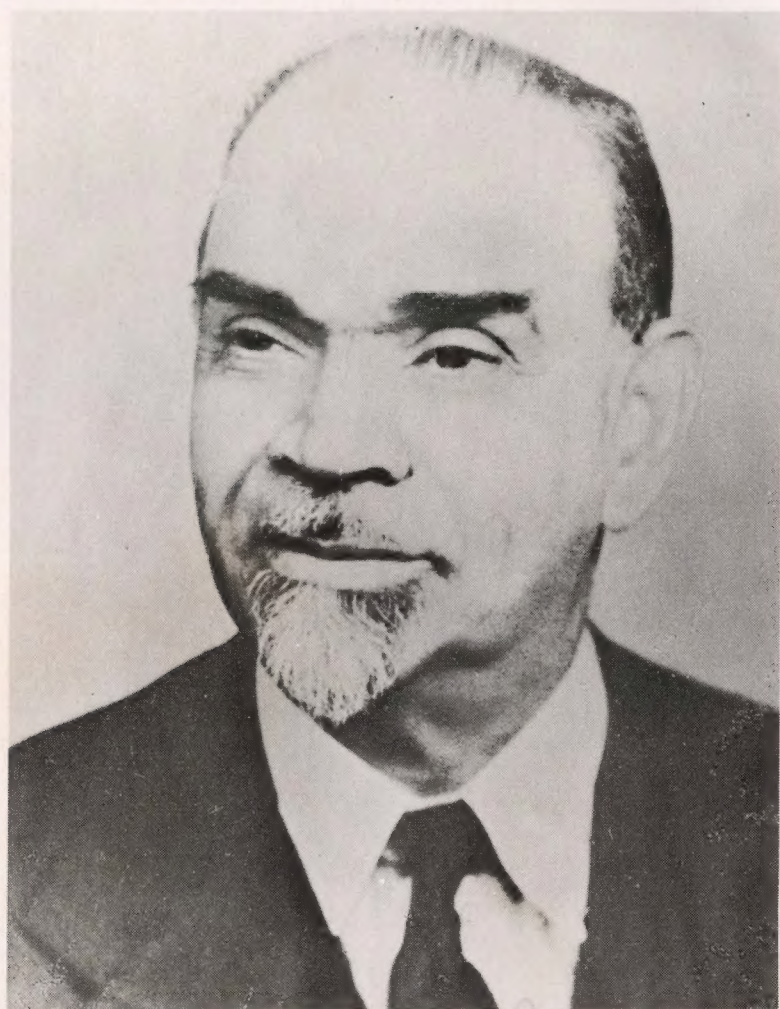
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## Preface

Sardar K.M. Panikkar was known to me for over twenty years. I had many occasions to talk and discuss with him matters relating to Malayalam literature, Kerala history, topical political developments, etc., in addition to facts relating to his life, especially those that have caused some major and minor controversies. If I had any idea then of writing his biography sometime, I would have kept a factual record of the meetings for later use.

It was only when certain persons in authority wanted to know some of the details of Sardar's life, that I began to toy with the idea of writing a biography. I started in right earnest and began to compile relevant material. I had to do this unaided, with the meagre resources I had at that time, and it took me over six years to complete this task.

My sincere thanks are due to the following eminent friends for their valued cooperation : to Dr. C.D. Narasimhiah for a sensitive account of his recollections of Sardar Panikkar as Vice Chancellor, to Dr. Ayyappa Paniker for his dispassionate assessment of this book in the "Foreword", and to Dr. K. Srinivasan for his valuable help, encouragement and suggestions for completing this study. I have used Dr. Narasimhiah's contribution, more or less fully, in the last chapter.

If, in the future, this book is of help to some student or scholar, either for reference or for use in the preparation of a better biography, I should feel more than rewarded for this labour of love.

Thiruvananthapuram

Konniyoor R. Narendranath





## Foreword

Biography in recent times has acquired a new generic status. It is no longer just one man's account of another nor the adventure of one soul in search of another or greater soul. It cannot be a lyrical outfit in praise of the achievements of a noble individual. A detailed chronological account of the deeds and happenings associated with a distinguished personality may not quite qualify for this designation. The readers of a biography these days expect a lot more from it. It has to be based on sound research; it must present facts from an analytical perspective; it should concern itself not only with the individual, who used to be referred to as the hero of the work in olden times. In short, a biography is expected to be a judicious amalgam of history, politics, psychology, philosophy, sociology, etc. It is often thought of as a work of an interdisciplinary nature. Most biographies may not quite measure up to these specifications, yet several of these components may be discovered in a large number of biographical works, although in varying, often unpredictable proportions.

The present work is significantly entitled **Sardar Panikkar: His Life and Times**. It intends to cover not only the private career of Panikkar as an individual, but attempts to trace the history of the times as well, while narrating the events that constitute the personal life of a public figure. This dovetailing of the personal and the historical, the private and the public, of what pertains to the individual and what concerns the community at large, follows perhaps Panikkar's own idea of the essence of history. Not the actions by themselves, but their consequences, appear to be the author's focus. This he achieves without sacrificing the value of biography as readable recreation of fiction. The episodes have to be reconstructed, and this requires the active operation of the

imagination. The biography has to be a convincing psychological account of a warm-blooded human being; at the same time it must evoke the picture of mankind in its onward progression. "Life" and "Times" point to the two parameters: this is particularly important here, since Panikkar was not only a writer of history, as most historians perhaps are, but also a maker of history. This double dimension, far from creating a dichotomy or contradiction in the case of the subject under study, lends a special relevance, a special charm to the narrative that projects it. From a rather backward rural setting to the limelight of history, from the quietude of a predominantly agricultural community to the trouble and turmoil of national and international politics: such is the trajectory of a career that Narendranath has chosen to describe. And this, I believe, he has accomplished with remarkable success. The hard labour he put in to collect facts and to arrange them with meticulous care and to present them in a readable language has borne fruit. He has thus produced the most comprehensive biography of Sardar Panikkar to date.

When the subject of a biography is a public personality, the tendency on the part of the biographer is to highlight the public activities and to de-emphasize the personal and the private. This turns the work into a piece of historical writing. The balance between the public and the private, between history and lyric, has to be maintained in a good biography. In the present book it appears there is a successful attempt to keep this balance, as may be seen particularly in the chapters on Amritsar and Paris. Andre Malraux's observations are not only shrewd comments in themselves, but also reveal a very important aspect of Panikkar's character and personality. In his encounters with his equals or even betters, he was seldom over-friendly or obsequious, never forgot his wit, seldom attempted self-effacement. Although a diplomat he did not always practise diplomacy in the popular sense. He was too

proud to make easy compromises. More than a politician, more than a diplomat, more than an administrator, Panikkar was an astute intellectual; he always knew that he knew more than other diplomats, the professional ones. I think this aspect is also brought out by this biography.

The concluding chapter, called "The Last Phase", is a summing up of what the author calls Panikkar's *vanaprastham*. It brings out Panikkar's strong points, what distinguished him from other politicians, administrators, diplomats and even text-book historians. As he mellowed in his last years, he developed a philosophic attitude to things; he came to have a holistic vision, without reducing himself to an arm-chair philosopher. He retained his rationalism to the last, and died in harness in full possession of his intellectual powers. I only wish the author had given some more attention to Panikkar's writings in Malayalam. Among the Keralaites thrown into public life, both at the national level and at the international level, Panikkar is unique in having maintained a life-long devotion to Malayalam language and literature. His works in English are the result of his intellectual labour, while those in Malayalam are mostly in the realm of imagination. Poet, playwright, novelist, essayist, critic, autobiographer and translator, this founder-president of Kerala Sahitya Akademi cherished an intimacy with his mother-tongue, unlike most of his distinguished contemporaries.

The purpose of writing the biography of a great man is perhaps two-fold: first, to disseminate information about him and his times to futurity; second to explore and discover the nature of human greatness. The author's attempt here is commendable on both counts.

Thiruvananthapuram

Ayyappa Panikker





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## EARLY YEARS

**K** AVALAM, a small sleepy hamlet about 20 kms inland from the coastal town of Alapuzha, is a typical area of Kuttanad. Extensive areas of paddy fields, rivulets, lakes and canals give the place an individuality of its own. The weather, though in most cases unpredictable, observes a regular cycle throughout the year. It was here in this peaceful village that Madhava Panikkar was born on 13 May 1894 as the second son of Puthillathu Parameswaran Namboodiri and Kunjikutti Kunjamma of Chalayil *Tharavad*. The Nayar joint family lived in a common house — *tharavad* — made of wood and to suit the requirements of the inhabitants.

Chalayil House at Kavalam, a branch of a reputed and influential Nayar *tharavad* at Valadi, was set up in 1832. It had claims to recognition and influence, as the senior members were mostly teachers, *asans*. Under the able management of Eravi Kesava Panikkar, the family made a quick recovery and it soon became a leading *tharavad* of the locality. The management of the family passed on to Eravi Ramakrishna Panikkar, the elder brother of Kunjikutty Amma, mother of K.M. Panikkar, on the demise of Kesava Panikkar. Though a simple man of rustic upbringing, Ramakrishna Panikkar nurtured very progressive views on social problems.

Madhavan's mother was a woman of ability who was not given to displaying her sentiments. This was especially true in her dealings with children and other members of the family. She showed no concession in matters of discipline and tradition. She was more respected than loved by the people of the household. Her responsibility was not limited to domestic matters but extended to the agricultural operations of the *tharavad*. Such matters took most of her time. The responsibility of the care and upbringing of the children thus

passed to the grandmother. Thus Madhavan spent more time with his grandmother than with his mother. The lovable old woman used to narrate to children tales of heroes of bygone days, legends relating to people and places, stories from Indian epics and puranas. She was not only a guide but also an active playmate in innumerable traditional games. It was but inevitable that Madhavan admired and loved her much more than he did his mother or any other member of the family.

Madhavan was initiated into traditional schooling at the age of four. His grandmother assisted him with Malayalam alphabet, reading and writing. This was pursued further under a *Kalari asan*, himself a member of the Chalayil family. The system was to train the wards to write first in sand and then on palm leaf with a stylus. They were also trained to recite in groups, the pronunciation of each alphabet rhythmically. After preliminary lessons in the basics of the language, the students moved on to arithmetic, classics like *Sri Krishna Charitam*, *Manipravalam*, etc. Madhavan was able to finish the course in a year. Yet his grandmother wanted him to continue for some more time in the same way, to ensure that the foundation became well set and firm. It was only much later that he got a chance to write on paper with a pencil!

Madhavan was now qualified to go for English education, and it was decided to send him to Thiruvananthapuram, where two other members of the family, Govinda Panikkar, the boy's uncle, and K.P. Panikkar, his elder brother, were engaged in their studies for the B.A. degree course and High School respectively.

Thiruvananthapuram, the capital of Kerala, also the headquarters of the erstwhile Travancore State, had enjoyed high prestige, not only as the administrative nerve centre of the State but also as a place of cultural and literary activities.



The premier educational institutions were located there. Those who went in quest of better fortunes perceived Thiruvananthapuram as the ultimate goal of their ambition.

While it was felt that the boy would get the best in education available in the State of Thiruvananthapuram it was also thought necessary to keep him under the control of the seniors of the family. Maharaja Srimulam Thirunal was then the ruler of the State. The rumblings of revolt against the worn-out social traditions and customs that controlled social behaviour, were occasionally heard on public platforms and seen in the pages of popular periodicals. The progressive movement of social reform initiated by Sree Narayana Guru found its expression in the establishment of SNDP Yogam in 1903. The Nayar leaders met, about ten years later, at Changanacherry and laid the foundation of Nair Service Society. The popularity and influence of the mass media was also evidently growing. *Malayala Manorama* established by Kandathil Varughese Mappila, at Kottayam, *Kavanakaumudi*, started in 1905 by Panthalam Kerala Varma, and later moved to Kottakkal under the editorship of P.V. Krishna Warriar, and *Kerala Patrika*, begun by K.C. Kunhirmann Menon at Calicut in 1884, were some of the publications that gained popularity among the people. This was the initial indication of the winds of change that gained momentum as days passed by. The political horizon too, was showing the first rays of the dawn of the inevitable, popular, democratic system. The traditional belief, that land is the last bet, lost its validity due to reforms that came about. For Nayers it was not just a period of transition from matrilineal to the patrilineal system: it had wider implications; the entire structure handed down for centuries based on land, was crumbling. The *tharavad* system was slowly withering away. The only successful means of survival with dignity was to get a government job as the best form of security. It was upto the people to qualify for it

through modern education. This realisation prompted the Nayers to invest in education in a big way. It was under these circumstances that Madhavan landed in Thiruvananthapuram to begin his English education, and started on his great adventure with the foreign language.

The Maharaja's school was one of the oldest in Travancore and yet it was out of bounds for the poor and the underprivileged. Some members of the staff were important people who, later, established a name in Travancore. P.K. Narayana Pillai, who came to be known later as 'Sahitya Panchananan', was teaching Malayalam in the High School classes.

As a boy of a large family, Madhavan received unreserved affection from his elders at home in Kavalam, especially from his grandmother. She provided protection from those who were supposed to be strict in their dealings with juniors, and the boy in turn looked upon her as a bulwark against any type of attack. This protection was absent at Thiruvananthapuram and he had to submit himself to the hard discipline imposed all around. Even though he suffered this in great anguish at that time, K.M. Panikkar in later life felt that a certain amount of punishment will certainly be in the interest of youngsters if it is meted out by persons who have some deep interest in the ward — "One cannot be dogmatic about the extent of freedom to be given to young children. True, modern psychology commends freedom in play and extra curricular activities as essential to development and condemns corporal punishment. But this is not the whole story. My own view is that children do benefit from punishment if it comes from people who really love them".

Madhavan was in Maharaja's School only upto Third Form. He did not impress anyone, let alone teachers, as a boy of promise or talent. He was poor at studies and indifferent in

extra-curricular activities, and such boys invite no attention. To crown it all, Madhavan failed in the Third Form examination. He had no good friend or guide or teacher in the school who helped to mould his outlook. The only person he remembered, many years later, when he became famous as a man of many-sided eminence, was his teacher in the primary school, Karimpuvilakom, Raman Pillai!

A favourite pastime of Madhavan was to challenge eminent visitors to his house interested in Malayalam poetry, to a literary contest, popularly known as *Aksharaslokam*. This is a form of trial by which an individual's capacity to recite from memory, a relevant and appropriate sloka, is put to test. An eminent scholar and editor of distinction, P.K. Govinda Pillai, was one who took up the challenge from the youngster with pleasure!

Cards and chess were the entertainments permitted in the house. Madhavan learnt these, by watching the friend who taught his uncle Govinda Panikkar the rules of the game. It is doubtful if the boy benefited much from his stay at Thiruvananthapuram. In any case, the establishment was closed as his uncle completed the course in law and brother his F.A. Examination.

Madhavan was to pursue his studies elsewhere. The decision was that he should do this at Anaprampa in Thalavadi, located on the fringe of Kuttanad. It was with his younger uncle that Madhavan lived during his schooling. In his autobiography Panikkar has described the environment: "Thalavadi school was a unique institution, with no parallel before or after. Cracked walls on insecure foundation, undivided class rooms crowded into one vast hall, a total lack of recreation space, was the picture that met the eye. Inexperienced teachers, indifferent pupils and a chaotic teaching system completed the picture." Since Madhavan

failed in the Third Form examination at Thiruvananthapuram he had to do it again in Anapramba School.

The school, in spite of all the efforts of Eravi Ramakrishna Panikkar, did not survive for long. The management ultimately closed it down, without any regrets. This was an event which delighted Madhavan the most.

There were some members in the *tharavad* who thought very poorly of Madhavan's abilities. His failure even in so low a class as Third Form, confirmed their presumption that the boy was unsuitable for academic pursuits. After much thought, the seniors decided to try again and send him to the reputed C.M.S. School at Kottayam. This was an institution established and managed by Christian missionaries. His boarding and lodging was arranged in the C.M.S. Hindu Hostel attached to the College. The warden of the hostel, Ambalapuzha Mahadeva Sharma, also functioned as teacher of Malayalam in the C.M.S. College. He and another teacher, K.N. Govinda Panikkar, were deeply involved in literary pursuits. Hence they did much to promote such activity among the younger generation, especially students.

Madhavan established some excellent friendship while he was in Kottayam. Paruthikattu Gopala Pillai, a youngman testing his talents in poetry, was a member of the literary group under Sharma. In this group, Pillai and Madhavan often met to exchange views on literary trends and ideas concerning western writers. Pillai was a voracious reader, who naturally predominated in such weekly discussions. The up-and-coming writers used to present their new poems for discussion and critical assessment. This provided, for aspirants, a training ground and healthy competition for literary pursuits.

After two years of study at C.M.S. School, Madhavan appeared for Matriculation Examination and returned home,



confident of success. But he failed miserably in the examination. It was a great shock to him and his people. Frustrated and moody, he spent many hours wandering alone on the banks of canals or sitting in silence under coconut groves far away from home. He was unable to bear people's expressions of sympathy or words of consolation. The tragic events roused in him a dreadful premonition of failure in life. His health began to decline, leading to illness.

In the next academic year, Madhavan made an unsuccessful bid to gain admission to Maharaja's English School at Thiruvananthapuram to complete the earlier course. This time too, he faced total disappointment. He was frustrated and deeply depressed. A sense of tragedy gripped his soul. He seriously doubted the very purpose of his existence. He was least inclined to return home but had to go back, as he fell seriously ill. He was escorted back home, because of his high fever and exhaustion. People there were evidently distressed. They had sympathies for the "poor thing" that had shown no capacity or intellectual calibre to cope with his studies. In due course, they concluded that he was unfit for any more schooling. Unable to bear this judgement, Madhavan one afternoon consumed a substantial quantity of chloroform which he had kept secretly. When he opened his eyes many hours later, he noticed his grandmother, like a shadow, giving his face a douche with cold water, amidst sounds of weeping and commotion all around. Family members gathered, as the news of his attempted suicide, spread rapidly in Kavalam.

This tragic episode further strengthened the feeling of the senior members that the boy was unfit for higher studies. They thought it unwise to force an inept youngster to continue studies in school. According to them, the unworthy could be left at home to look after the *tharavad*. The senior

*Karanavar* also agreed to this assessment. There was only one person K.P. Panikkar, his elder brother, who dared to sound a note of dissent. He believed that the boy deserved a better deal. He was at that time in Edinburgh, pursuing his medical studies. He wrote to the *Karanavar* a detailed letter in which he strongly suggested to send Madhavan to Madras to complete his Matriculation. Thanks to this strong plea, the *Karanavar* decided to pack off the problem-boy to Madras, for his final attempt.

Madhavan got admitted to St. Paul's High School, Vepery, Madras. This was an establishment with a rich tradition of excellence and accomplishment. At that time, the institution was almost two centuries old. It had valid claims as one of the earliest and oldest missionary schools in India. Though founded almost two centuries earlier, the school assumed the patronage of St. Paul, only in 1912. It thus became St. Paul's High School. The very next year Madhavan joined there as a student to complete his Matriculation Examination. The Headmaster at that time was Rev. R.U. Potts.

The true witnesses to the history of St. Paul's High School were the two or three little clumps of bamboos in front of the school. In their drooping, willowy posture, they made golden-ribbed green sunshades — at the beginning of the year, ante-chambers for boys seeking admission, and waiting room for parents. Here Madhavan too found an area of peace to spend moments placidly. His life in the school was uneventful; he had no new friendship or other attachments. His only aim was to write the examination, which he did well and passed out of the school. He was now eligible for collegiate education.

K.P. Panikkar, who was then at Edinburgh, strongly held

that his brother should join him in England for further studies. Most of the members in the family also concurred with him, as Madhavan re-established his credentials and competence, by passing the Matriculation test, from an institution which had links with famous centres of education in England. K.P. Panikkar initiated steps for his brother's admission into Christ Church, at Oxford. At that period of time, admissions for the year were over. So Madhavan had to wait till the next session.

It was decided that the best way to spend the intervening period was, for him to undergo a course in the Christian College, which was at that time in Madras city. When Panikkar joined the Christian College, it was functioning at George Town. It continued to be there till July 1937, when it was shifted to the present location at Tambaram. Hence, he joined there as a junior Intermediate student. There was no serious intention on his part to complete the course. Most of the time was spent in preparing himself for admission at Oxford.

Madhavan's interest in literature, initiated at Thalavadi and Kottayam, was strengthened with opportunities that came his way in Madras. He began to bestow attention on writing in Malayalam with passion, and forwarded them on a regular basis to *Deepika* a daily from Kottayam.

While at Christian College, he was lodged with some elder students in Kaithanus Hostel, located on the College campus. This stay helped to establish links with a number of young inmates who came from Kerala and other regions of India. Among them were Puthezhathu Rama Menon, Nantheylathu Padmanabha Menon, C.K. Vijayaraghavan, P. Balakrishna Menon and others. The contact so established was destined in due course to mature into long-standing friendship. His classmates and College-mates included Sadasiva

Reddy, and G.V. Kripanidhi. He also had occasion to move closely with R.K. Shanmugham Chetty, who in later years became an active member of the Justice Party, then a congressman and ultimately an administrator. He became Dewan of Cochin and was the first Finance Minister in post-independent India.



## OXFORD AND AFTER

**M**ADHAVA Panikkar's educational progress was disappointing so far. The presumption was that he had poor intellectual capacity to cope with modern demands. Still, in despair, his elders decided as a final step, to send him to Oxford for "a gentleman's education". Though he had qualified in the Matriculation Examination at Madras, it was with serious apprehensions that Panikkar was asked to apply for admission to Christ College, Oxford. To add to the uncertainty, the whole of Europe was already an area of tension due to political developments there. Ominous clouds were hovering over the horizon portending the worst. The question was, when and where a war would break out. Panikkar was going from a land that remained far away from the centres of such trouble and turmoil. This was also his maiden journey outside his country. His brother, K.P. Panikkar, was the first member of the Nayar community from Central Travancore to cross the ocean and go abroad for higher studies. It required much foresight and courage on the part of *Karanavar* Eravi Ramakrishna Panikkar, himself a person who had no modern education, to decide to initiate steps for his nephews to go beyond the seas for academic qualifications.

K.P. Panikkar, in Edinburgh at that time, had taken some initial steps for his brother's admission to one of the major colleges in Oxford. Oxford always held a great fascination for people in India. It had attracted students the world over, and India was no exception. "It seems to embody", in the words of Henry James, who lived in London for more than twenty years, "with undreamed completeness, a kind of dim and sacred ideal of Western intellect..... No other spot in Europe, I imagine, extorts from our barbarous hearts so passionate an admiration."

Unlike most other Indian students, Madhava Panikkar was going to Oxford without first having a degree from any Indian University. He left India in the middle of April 1914. On reaching Marseilles en route, he sent a telegram asking his brother to meet him at London. Unfortunately the message did not reach him. However, Madhava Panikkar managed to reach "Marchmount Crescent" in Edinburgh where his brother was lodged.

The dark clouds of war were gathering strength, and the worst was only five months away. Admission to colleges in Oxford were scheduled for October, but Madhava Panikkar decided to reach England much earlier. The entrance test in the College was held towards the end of May. The examination was simple, and he faced no difficulty. No one could have been more surprised than he, when the college admitted him in preference to those with brilliant University degrees! He came to know later that Dr. John Murry, the junior censor of the college in-charge of admission, was gifted with what he called, a fifth sense, to assess from handwriting, the character of young men and their fitness for admission.

During the four days following the test, Panikkar was lodged with other Indian students studying at Oxford. The eldest of the group was Asudamal Gidwani from Sind, who had been there for over two years. He took, from the date they met, a special liking for this youngster from Travancore. Because of Gidwani's support, Panikkar got over his initial nervousness and gained self-confidence in the new environment.

Gidwani had some excellent contacts and intimate friends at Oxford. They used to meet often to discuss matters relating to literature, art or politics that had contemporary relevance. On one such occasion when they gathered at B.K. Mallick's lodge, Gidwani took Panikkar along with him. It was

a pleasant gathering where most of the Indian student leaders were present. Exchange of views created a lot of heat, as opinions were expressed in strong terms. In the discussion that followed on contemporary western literature, Henrik Johan Ibsen, George Bernard Shaw, Gilbert Keith, G.K. Chesterton and Francis Thomson were mentioned. Madhava Panikkar enjoyed every bit of it, but could not follow anything meaningfully! He was hearing the names of these leading writers for the first time! He could sit there only as a mute witness to an illuminating debate. He felt miserable as he could not make any contribution to it.

It was very late when the company dispersed. Panikkar was sad and depressed. He had met a representative group of youngsters who were going to be his associates and friends during his period in the University. He felt small and dejected, inadequate and ignorant, and spent a sleepless night, wondering how an ignoramus like himself could live among such learned people.

When Madhava Panikkar came to Oxford, the major topic of concern for all was War and only War. The atmosphere in the University itself was charged with sentiments relating to this struggle for survival. George Nathaniel Curzon was the Chancellor of the University throughout the War. A statesman and administrator, he was Viceroy and Governor General of India (1898-1905), Member of Lloyd George's War Cabinet (1916-18) and later Foreign Secretary (1919-1924).

Panikkar started as a student in Christ Church College when the term began in October. K.P.S. Menon, who was a student of the same College later, has given a warm and intimate picture of the college and its surroundings as it was at that time. "Christ Church or in Latin *Aedes Christi*, the house of Christ, was generally known as the 'House'. To live in the 'House' and breathe its atmosphere itself was an

education. I loved every inch of the college. Tom Tower built by Christopher Wren, Great Tom which had been taken from Osney Abbey and which pealed a curfew of 101 strokes at 9.05 P.M., Tom Quad with its Mercury Fountain, where K.M. Panikkar was once ducked, Peckwater Quad, where I lived during my first three terms and the beautiful meadows of Christ Church, where I thought out my speeches for Oxford Mujlis and my poems to my sister-in-law, lovely Tudor staircase leading to our dining hall, the dining hall itself adorned with the portraits by such as Reynolds and Grainsborough, and the great kitchen which gave rise to the taunt in the sixteenth century that Wolsey wanted to found a college but built a tavern." This description of the institution well suits our purpose as Menon reached Oxford at the time when Madhava Panikkar was just getting ready to leave England. Panikkar contributed, while studying there, some articles about Oxford, the methods and system of education there, and some other current topics to *Bhasha Poshini*, *Kairali*, *Mangalodayam* and other journals in Malayalam.

Madhava Panikkar had some initial difficulties prior to getting accustomed to the way of life, which was totally new to him. The problems were mainly connected with the food habits and daily routine. His teachers and friends helped him to get over them and slowly he came to terms with the surroundings.

The Dean of Christ Church College at that time was Thomas B. Strong who was also Vice-Chancellor of the University. Always willing and free to help students in whatever way possible, he extended goodwill to Panikkar too. Arther Hassel, the tutor, also gave unrestricted assistance to Panikkar not only in studies but also in acclimatising himself to the new environment. The tutor was more like a brother in his solicitude. A period which had possibilities for



unpleasantness, thus ultimately transformed itself into an unforgettable memory.

Life on the campus was akin to that of the Gurukula system in India. Students and their teachers were intimately linked in a common effort to impart and receive the best in education. The Professors considered their wards as friends. There was no limit to the love and affection showered on the students by their gurus. There was freedom for expressing honest opinions and views. The only other centre of learning that had given this facility so abundantly and liberally was the University of Paris.

When Madhava Panikkar entered the University, there were about sixty students from India. It was easy for him to establish friendship, as these youngsters had common interests. The regularity with which Panikkar pursued the reading habit, helped him to join any discussion or debate with ease. He had no strong likes or dislikes. He cultivated and nourished with great care, the talent for communication. This quality in him developed and blossomed into an art in later life. There are many known and not so well-known, who cherished memories of delightful moments with him. T.C. Davis, Ambassador of Canada to Germany in 1954, has recorded his experience. "He is, of course, a brilliant conversationalist and wherever he is, people gather about him because they know that they will hear from him comments interestingly made and of infinite interest." There were students from India who distinguished themselves in conversation and debate, one of whom was H.N. Suhrawardy.

There were four Malayalis at Oxford including Panikkar during this period, the senior most among them being John Mathai. He was an old student of Madras Christian College, where Panikkar had also spent some time. Mathai had already established a reputation in academic circles. He had come to

Oxford for research work and was respected by the student community, especially those from India. Panikkar knew him well. Since Mathai had little to do with matters literary, either in Malayalam or in English, their contacts were formal. In later life too, the same position continued, even though in India they met many a time at various levels in different areas of activity.

Panikkar had a more intimate and sentimental contact with another student from Kerala, V. Krishna Thampi. He was there to study Sanskrit literature. Thampi was a brother-in-law of the then ruling monarch of the erstwhile Travancore State, Srimoolam Thirunal. At Oxford they met on a different level and were able to establish a rapport without inhibitions. Thampi's aristocratic bearing and behaviour had all the qualities of a cultured person. But though remarkably intelligent, he never took life seriously, and gave the impression of idling away most of his time. Because of their common interest in literature in general and poetry in particular, they used to spend a lot of time together discussing and exchanging views on literary trends in Malayalam.

Unlike the others from Kerala, Kuruvilla Zachariah was one who avoided company and devoted his time to studies only. Paramasiva Subbarayan, hailing from Tamil Nadu, was an undergraduate in the Wadham College in Oxford. Panikkar had established friendship with him from the beginning and used to visit Subbarayan's house in North Oxford frequently.

Even while he was a student at Oxford, Madhava Panikkar began to write, in English, to journals and newspapers of established reputation. His first contribution was on the freedom struggle in Hungary to *Indian Review* published by G.A. Natesan at Madras. Gandhiji's South African work was widely published in the Madras Presidency through the press

led by the *Indian Review*. Gandhiji had high esteem for Natesan and his laudable services to the country. In the journal owned and edited by such a person, Panikkar received a ready welcome. The editor expressly requested him to make contributions as frequently as possible.

Another event of interest at this time was his contact with T.K. Swaminathan, founder-editor of *Indian Emigrant*. He was a dedicated and sincere worker, whose objective was to be helpful to the people of Indian origin in other countries. He had the blessings and goodwill of Gopalakrishna Gokhale, Srinivasa Sastri, Gandhiji, C.F. Andrews and others. To this end, Swaminathan set up an organisation in 1914 under the name 'Indian Colonial Society'. When this began to gain momentum, the *Indian Emigrant* became *Colonial Review*. Swaminathan announced an essay competition for Indians living abroad with an award amount of Rs. 100/- contributed by C.P. Ramaswamy Aiyer. Madhava Panikkar's piece was selected as the best among the many received. The editor, Swaminathan, later published it in the form of a book, entitled *Introduction to the Problems of Greater India* (1916) with an appreciative foreword by C.P. Ramaswamy Aiyer. The cost of the publication was met from the prize money. Though it was a small episode, it had strange consequences and became a significant event in the destiny of the young writer. A prestigious journal in London, *Asiatic Review*, noticed it as a compelling work, when it published a review by no less a person than Sir Ronald Wilson Baronett. This inevitably led to wider notice and the views expressed in *Problems of Greater India* gained in importance. In the Introduction, after a detailed examination of the contents, Sri Aiyer said — "Panikkar has attempted to analyse the political and economic factors of emigration (of Indians) and has given a fairly clear resume of the anti-Asiatic laws and the result of such laws. His book is not a political pamphlet but a serious attempt by



an earnest student of sociology and political economy, to study the large social and historical problem of emigration and to correlate them with the distinctions that can never be minimised between the Indian civilization and European system of life." The book was dedicated by the author to Monsieur Nakano of Osaka Ashi Shimbun, whose interest in the subject was a great encouragement to Panikkar. The topic formed the subject of discussion in many academic and cultural circles. Panikkar was introduced to the Secretary, East India Association, Dr. John Pollan when he went to obtain a copy of the *Asiatic Review*. Dr. Pollan praised the book unreservedly and congratulated its author on the success he had achieved. The Secretary, on the spot, extended an invitation to the young author to present a paper on Indian Education in one of the Sessions of the East India Association, then a citadel of Anglo-Indian orthodoxy. It was a rare honour for a young man like Panikkar. The presentation of the paper was widely reported. A prestigious publication, *The Times Educational Supplement*, wrote a special lead article upon it, which came to the notice of a wider circle of individuals, who were in positions of power, not only in academic circles but also in Government, in England and in India. This was, indeed, a great boost to a young aspiring author. He continued with greater zeal his efforts to write for journals like *Modern Review*, *Indian Review*, *Hindustan Review*, *Common Weal*, etc.

Though Madhava Panikkar was far away from his home State, he did not forget or neglect his devotion to his mother tongue. His intense interest in European trends in poetry and drama enabled him to make similar efforts in Malayalam. His proposal on the relevance of the Dravidian metre was published in *Deepika* to begin with and later in *Kavana Kaumudi's* special number *Bhashavilasom*. His poems were accepted by *Kavana Kaumudi* which was edited by an

esteemed poet, P.V. Krishna Warriar. The journal was one of the best at that time and was patronised not only by scholars but also by the public all over Kerala.

An incident of significance in the later activities of Panikkar may be relevant here. He was deeply impressed with a poem entitled "A letter" by Vallathol Narayana Menon, which had appeared in *Kavana Kaumudi*. Panikkar sought assistance of its editor to get the other publications of the author of that poem. Surprisingly, the books came to him direct from the poet Vallathol Narayana Menon with a personal note. This was the starting point of a long and intimate friendship between the two. Vallathol was the most notable literary figure in Kerala and was accepted as a leader of the cultural revival in the State. Apart from other works of merit, he had translated the famous Sanskrit epic, *Ramayana* and also had composed a Mahakavya in the style of the Sanskrit poets. Vallathol later accepted the suggestion of Panikkar to write, as far as possible, poems in the Dravidian metre. His poem "Oru Chitram", on a painting of Ravi Varma, depicting child Krishna with cowherd mother, was the first of this genre. He followed this method and wrote some of his best lyrics in this way. Soon others followed him and it became an established practice in creative circles.

While in Oxford, Panikkar had occasion to establish close friendship with two eminent elders, one from Tamil Nadu and the other from Sri Lanka. They were Dr. T.M. Nair and Don Baron Jayatilake respectively. Dr. T.M. Nair, a doctor of repute, was one of the chief initiators of the non-Brahmin movement in Tamil Nadu, which took shape on November 20, 1916 at a meeting in Madras City. The first step in the direction of the formation of the non-Brahmin Movement in Madras Presidency was the founding in 1914 of the "Dravidian Home" by C. Natesa Mudaliar, a doctor by



profession and a prominent figure in Madras politics. The next one was the establishment of Dravidian Association by Mudaliar with the Raja of Panagal and T. Madhavan Nair as President and Vice - President respectively. Mudaliar was its secretary. At a conference at the Victoria Hall (the present Rajaji Hall) on 20 Nov. 1916, the South Indian People's Association (SIPA) was organised as a Joint Stock Company. While Pitti Theagaraya Chetti and T. Madhavan Nair are regarded as the founders of this non-Brahmin Movement, Ramarayananagar (Raja of Panagal) is credited with having fostered it. In December, the same year, SIPA published a manifesto addressed to 'The Non-Brahmin gentlemen throughout the Presidency', which was in effect the first salvo in launching the Movement. Soon after the Association purchased a printing press and brought out the first issue of *Justice*, their official organ in english on 26 February 1917. It was soon followed by *Dravidan* in Tamil and *Andhra Prakasika* in Telugu.

The leaders decided to form another association for the political advancement of their community — under the name South Indian Liberal Federation (SILF). The opponents of SILF referred to it as the Justice Party. The Federation itself eventually adopted it as its unofficial name — thus popularly known as Justice Party. It claimed to represent the interests of all non-Brahmins, including Muslims, Christians and Untouchables, in the Presidency. Dr. Nair did not limit his activities or writings to medical topics, and took over the editorship of *Justice* on 16 February, 1917. By his devastating wit and humour, irony and sarcasm, invective and innuendo he tried to debunk Mrs. Besant in the eyes of the people. Mrs. Besant was prominent in the politics of the day.

Madhava Panikkar was deeply impressed by Dr. Nair and his admiration found expression in no uncertain terms in

his autobiography — "There never was a manlier Malayali. A lion-like face, long curving moustache, massive chest, somewhat portly figure and powerful arms made up his impressive physical presence. His intellect and powers of expression were equally uncommon. One had only to talk to him for a couple of minutes, to fall under his spell. I have never seen an Indian to equal him as a conversationalist.

The result of the final college examination held in June 1917 justified the devotion and intensity with which Panikkar did his job. He was one of the four to achieve first class in the University. Christ Church College had not before awarded the Dixon Research Scholarship to an Indian student. Panikkar was the first to get it. Most of the Indians at Oxford in his time were graduates with honours degree from India. They were inclined to look down upon a raw matriculate with a certain amount of superiority. Resenting this attitude, Panikkar had challenged one of the most aggressive among them and said that, whatever his handicaps, he would do better than him in the final examination. This he did and kept his word!

The Vice-Chancellor Thomas B. Strong, in a letter dated 6 July 1917, congratulating Panikkar on his splendid success, "hoped that this is the beginning of a successful career." Hassel, who was equally happy, noted: "In my long career as tutor of History at Christ Church, I have never had a more brilliant student."

Though a student of history, Panikkar had so far not delved into India's past in a systematic manner. An opportunity opened up before him immediately after he completed his course in Oxford. The eminent historian, Vincent A. Smith, in Oxford at that time, was preparing his *History of India*. Panikkar got a chance to assist him with some details and was expected to do some research in certain periods of Indian

history. This helped the young scholar to be acquainted with the methodology of history writing. While he was thus employed, Panikkar also qualified himself in Anthropology with distinction. This 'apprenticeship' in history writing stood him in good stead in later years when he wrote his own books on various periods of Indian and Asian history. He later recorded the significant fact that "many of those who have interpreted history most successfully, have not been academic historians or indeed professional historians. They were not concerned with research or study of misty documents or controversies about details but either with broad sweep of events relating to a particular people or period or with conflicts which arise as a result of the upsurge of new forces. The researcher and the meticulous monographer, who subjected a limited period to a microscopic study, have hardly ever reached the status of historians. They have been providers of raw materials out of which historians have created their great works."

By September 1918, Madhava Panikkar was ready to return home. But the time was far from propitious for a long journey by sea. The intensity of the War shifted from land to sea from 1 February 1917. There was unrestricted submarine attacks against shipping in the North Atlantic and around the British Isles. The immediate effect of this strategy of sinking ships at sight, was the giving up of neutrality by the U.S.A. President Wilson declared war on Germany on 6 April 1917. The U.S.A was thus forced "into the most terrible and disastrous of all wars".

There was difficulty in getting a journey ticket from England to India. Several well-wishers like Dr. T.M. Nair advised Panikkar to give up the idea of the return journey at that time. They expected the War to end soon as the general trend was in favour of Allies and Germany was on the verge



of total collapse. But Panikkar was terribly home-sick and desired to leave at the earliest opportunity, whatever the hazards. Finally, he left London for India by S.S. *Tasman* on 11 September 1918 with prayers on his lips for a safe return. He bade farewell to friends, and standing on the deck, saw the coast of England receding in the fading light of the setting sun. He stood recalling nostalgic memories of the four years of a rich life on the English soil. Many were the unique episodes to be treasured. Innumerable were the friendships that had led to the discovery of new meanings and depths of human warmth. He was now going home, as a totally different man. The foundations for a truly rich and varied life had been well laid during the years at Oxford.

It was the fourth day of the journey. After lunch the passengers retired to their corners. Panikkar was half asleep, when at about 4 O' clock in the afternoon, a deafening sound was heard, followed by unidentifiable turmoil and unusual confusion. By the time he was able to realise what had happened, the ship itself had turned to one side. It was hit by a torpedo and the very thought of it sent a cold shiver up his spine. What next? And how? In a short while, the boat would sink and disappear without a trace. Panic, tumult and confusion — everywhere!

All available life-boats were lowered and as many people as possible were taken on them. More than half the ship was already gone under. Within a few minutes, it would disappear into the deep. Those on the deck of the tilted ship were ordered to jump into the sea and the panicky crowd did so, in the hope that they would be saved. Panikkar was among them. He was adept in swimming and his training in Kuttanad stood him in good stead at this time of crisis. Soon he was taken into a boat. From there, he saw the ship disappear into the turbulent sea. It dawned on him then that



he had only a shirt on his body. He was shivering. Chilly wind aggravated the cold. The sun was soon to set and light was fast fading. There was wailing and utter confusion in the boat. Night came and they were engulfed in total darkness. The furious roar of giant waves, the eerie sound produced by the cold sea wind and innumerable other noises that one hears on a restless sea at night — all aggravated the atmosphere of helplessness and dejection. But Panikkar had a lingering hope that he would survive and be saved.

The boat was over-crowded and there was not even room to sit. It was filled knee-deep with water. Those on board were tired and exhausted. The continuous chilly wind, the tilting of the boat by huge waves, undue tension and exertion, all produced in Panikkar sea-sickness of the worst type. To top it all, by midnight the weather changed for the worse. A storm started to blow, bringing with it heavy rain and blizzard. The modicum of hope that he had began to dissolve in the roaring sound of the giant waves. The inevitable end might come before the next dawn. The wearied and dejected Panikkar received some comfort from a young man near him, who patted him on his back, and put him to deep sleep. Many hours passed before he was awakened by impetuous cries in the boat — “There, a light! in that distant horizon, a light!” — It was true. They sighted the flicker of an unsteady, feeble flame in the distant sea! “May be a ship! A ship on its mission of mercy to save us!” They yelled with hope. But it slowly faded out, for it was the submarine that destroyed the ship, lying in wait to watch whether any help was coming to them. The people on the boat were tired beyond description. They were hungry and desperate. The storm had subsided and the sky cleared. A weak moon rose beyond the waves in the distant horizon. The night was long and the struggle for survival intense. The first rays of dawn began to illuminate the horizon. But in their faces, despair

and tragedy was large and clear. By midday they sighted a ship approaching. An American ship it was! What a relief! They would be saved at last! They were taken on board and cared for, till safety entrusted with authorities at Brest, a naval port, north-west of France, early next morning.

The only material possession Panikkar had with him was the shirt on his body. Among the things lost, the most precious were a good collection of about two thousand books. There were also some important private letters from men of eminence that he had treasured.

The passengers were taken to England the very next day. Panikkar was one among the fifty-two lucky ones, saved, out of 273 people aboard that ill-fated ship. He was determined to go home by the next available boat. His efforts succeeded and he left England within ten days of his escape.

Panikkar's people received him with warmth and affection. He had not experienced such happiness before or after. The long wait and the providential escape heightened the joy of this first home-coming. But the absence of his dear grandmother, who passed away when Panikkar was at Oxford, touched him deeply. However, this terrible grief slowly faded with the passing days.

Panikkar began to assess the changes that had come over people and places all around. Most of the Nayar *tharavads* had fallen victims to the tornado of changes brought about through legislation. In many *tharavads*, the mad race for partition was on, resulting in a total dislocation of the social and economic fabric of their members. In most parts of Travancore, *tharavad* division was occurring in a big way, even before the passing of the Nair Act of 1925. Much of the land theoretically impartible and inalienable, was being sold or mortgaged.

The first Nair Act was enacted in 1913. It recognised *Sambandham* as a legal marriage and allowed the wife and children of a Nayar dying intestate one half of the husband's self-acquired property. But this fell short of the Marumakkathayam Committee recommendations and the demands of Nayar leaders.

Madhava Panikkar's return in glory and his creditable achievements naturally prompted his elders to think in terms of his future. The immediate plan was to arrange his wedding. It was, for all practical purposes, known and settled: he was to marry the eldest daughter of his uncle, Eravi Ayyappa Panikkar. The girl and he had been playmates from childhood and she was with Madhava Panikkar's mother in Chalayil house for most of the time. She grew up in the family with all the love and care that an aristocratic Nayar girl used to get in that set-up. She had no English education and her knowledge of the world was limited to that of the village where she was born and brought up. But she had all the grace and dignity that was natural in a girl of rustic background.

The wedding was celebrated in November 1918 with hardly any festivity or fanfare. It was purely a family affair. After their wedding, the couple left for Madras, where Panikkar's elder brother was working at that time.

The Montague-Chelmsford Report was published in July 1918. The proposals as a whole were viewed by the Congress as "disappointing and unsatisfactory." Soon followed the Sedition Committee Report and Rowlatt Committee Recommendations, which were passed into an Act. Mahatma Gandhi formed a Satyagraha Sabha in Bombay to organise demonstrations all over India. His arrest and the Jallianwala Bagh massacre roused the nation as nothing else had done before.



Though Madhava Panikkar was closely following the events and imbibing the spirit that was flooding the land, his immediate goal was to settle down in some useful employment. Even before he returned from England, his brother had initiated some steps on his behalf. C. Ramalinga Reddi, a close friend and well-wisher, was Inspector General of Education of Mysore State at that time. The special editorial comment in *The Times Education Supplement* on the speech of Madhava Panikkar at East India Association, London, had attracted Reddi's attention and high appreciation. Madhava Panikkar's brother was working in Bangalore at that time. When, on one occasion, he met Reddi their conversation incidentally turned to Madhava Panikkar and his prospects. He was told that Madhava Panikkar was expected to return to India, as soon as his course was over, at Oxford. Reddi indicated a desire to meet the youngman soon after his arrival. Utilising this standing invitation, Madhava Panikkar proceeded to Bangalore in December 1918. He had known Reddi only through his brother and had no idea about his intentions or attitude.

Reddi received Panikkar with warmth and courtesy. In the course of their conversation, he told Panikkar of Muhammedan Anglo Oriental College, Aligarh, where European professors had resigned *en masse*. Indians with high academic qualifications from reputed foreign universities were being sought to fill up those vacancies. Panikkar was really excited. Carrying a letter of introduction from Reddi, he went to meet Ross Masood, Director of Public Instruction of Nizam's Government at Hyderabad. M.A.O. College management had sought the assistance of Masood to recommend suitable hands for employment in top positions in the college.

Ross Masood was the only grandson of Sir Sayyid



Ahamed Khan, the founder of M.A.O. College. Masood had his education at New College, Oxford and was, as observed by Panikkar, a perfect synthesis of the East and the West. "In appearance he was extremely striking. He stood over six feet three inches in height and was broad in proportion — altogether an impressive figure. Though, to those who did not know him, he gave the impression of being aloof, he was, when the ice was broken, easy and friendly in conversation."

Panikkar met Masood at Hyderabad on 31 December 1918. The mission proved a great success. At the instance of Masood, Panikkar returned to Madras along with him in the company of Akbar Hydari. Though they were much older and far more important persons holding high positions, Panikkar had no occasion to feel ill at ease during the journey. On reaching Madras, Masood again wanted him to spend a few days with them. They were guests of Sir Abdul Rahim who was then the officiating Chief Justice of the Madras High Court. Sir Rahim, it may be mentioned, had held several important positions in Public life. He was a Member of the Executive Council, Government of Bengal, Leader of the Bengal Muslim Party, Member of the Joint Parliamentary Committee, Leader of Indian Delegation to the Empire Parliamentary Associations Conference held in England (1935) and President of the Central Legislative Assembly. As a reputed jurist, he had several books to his credit, e.g., *Principles of Mohammadan Jurisprudence*. It was at Sir Rahim's residence that the guests from Hyderabad, including Panikkar, stayed. The Franchise and Functions Committee, popularly called the Southborough Committee, was touring India for the delimitation purpose under Chelmsford Reforms. They were in Madras at this time. One of its members, Surendranath Banerjee, was staying already as Sir Rahim's guest. Panikkar was delighted to learn of the presence of Banerjee "who was to India what Demosthenes was to

Greece." The grand old man was Congress President in two sessions, one at Patna (1895) and the other at Ahmedabad (1902). This is how Panikkar recounts the experience: "In appearance, he was unimpressive. Short and lean, a man of plain features and a lined face, he was altogether an unprepossessing figure. I was amazed that this man could have fired Bengal with his eloquence and shaken the legendary Lord Curzon himself. Only the gleam in his eyes gave a hint of the extra-ordinary spirit within this common frame. Even at the age of 70, he rose at 4 A.M. and took a two-mile walk before breakfast at dawn." The meeting was for Panikkar an unforgettable experience. It was also during this halt that he met C.P. Ramaswamy Aiyer one evening in a bookstall on Mount Road. When Masood introduced him, Panikkar made a mention of the essay competition arranged by *Colonial Review* and the prize he had won.

The days with these personalities were fruitful, rewarding and most elevating to Panikkar. In fact, this was but the first of many meetings he had with them in later life. As such, the first meeting had larger, far - reaching implications. It, indeed, provided a firm foundation for lasting friendships which flourished and fructified in later years.

Panikkar was launched on his career by two worthy men, C.R. Reddi and Ross Masood, whose expectations he fulfilled in ample measure by his later achievements.

## ALIGARH

**A**LIGARH is located eighty miles from Delhi, fifty miles from Agra, less than forty from Mathura and Brindavan. The Muhammedan Anglo Oriental College, also called the Madrasal - Ul. Ulum Musalman, was established at Aligarh on 24 May 1875, and regular instruction was started from June first. The residential establishment was so planned as to ensure total divorce from the family life. It was a world of its own, bound by the walls of the college quadrangle. Every aspect of life would be regulated according to well-articulated educational strategies. Aligarh was a total institution, a place where boys and young men found themselves locked into a shared situation, enclosed within the physical and psychological boundaries of formally administered social establishment. "What was wanted was", as made clear by Theodore Beck, the first Principal, "a college which would give an English education and at the same time teach the Muhammedan religion". To start with, the college was an affiliate of Calcutta University and continued to be so till 1887, when it came under the Allahabad University. The nearest prototype accepted was that of the public school — Oxford — Cambridge example. The gradual development of the MAO College into a major educational centre for Muslims in the country and its growth into a University constitute an important element in the history of Muslim education.

After his meeting with Ross Masood at Hyderabad, it was only a question of time as far as Madhava Panikkar's appointment in the Mohammedan Anglo-Oriental College was concerned. He was immensely happy, and waited for the call from Aligarh.

Panikkar had no idea, when at Oxford that he would get assistance so freely from sources that were not even known

to him. The very persons, C.R. Reddi and Ross Masood were strangers to him. But it was they who changed the course of his life! It was not by choice that he grasped the opportunity to serve in this institution which was more than 45 years old. The events took their turn and he accepted them. He rejoiced when he received the call letter for interview at the end of March 1919. He was received at the railway station by no less a person than Sayyid Muhammed Ali, the secretary. Sayyid Ali was the grandson of the founder and as such enjoyed immense influence and authority in all matters associated with the affairs of the establishment. Panikkar stayed with him till matters relating to his posting were settled. Ali treated him as a member of his family and his affection continued to grow as years went by. Ali himself arranged for Panikkar's stay for the rest of the term with another person, Sahebzada Aftab Ahmad Khan, father-in-law of Masood, who was at that time a member of the Secretary of State's Council. The association with these distinguished people had left their mark on Panikkar. The ever-present aristocratic atmosphere reinforced his ambition to aspire for ever greater eminence and recognition. When the College reopened in the new academic year, he shifted his stay to a private house where he continued till an official college house was made available. The permanent residence was spacious and convenient for the pursuit of a life of academic interests. For the rest of his life in Aligarh, he stayed here, assiduously utilising his spare time for study and writing.

In 1920, Jamia Millia Islamia was founded at Aligarh, as it was felt that the M.A.O. College did not fulfil the aspirations of the Muslim intelligentsia and scholars. It came through due to the efforts of nationalist Muslims like Maulana Mohammed Ali, Dr. Mukhtar Ahmed Ansari, Hakim Ajmal Khan and Zakir Hussain. The new institution came up on the other side of the campus of the M.A.O. College, separated only by a street.



The moving spirit of that institution was the young Zakir Hussain, then a student of the M.A.O. College. The new establishment was to provide an opportunity to those students who responded to the call to boycott government-aided colleges. Some nationalists, who wanted to serve the cause of national education, joined the new institution, which was housed in a spacious bungalow. K. Santhanam, K.G. Subramaniam and G.V. Kripinidhi joined it in 1921.

Panikkar had good relations with most of the members serving the Jamia Millia Islamia. They used to visit him, and these visits aroused, naturally, doubt about his real allegiance. Some people considered him as a "concealed non-cooperator". There were others like Dr. Ziauddin, who doubted his integrity, and was therefore for Panikkar's summary replacement, when the case for his confirmation came up. There were also other pro-government groups in the Managing Committee who tried to dislodge him. But these attempts did not succeed due to the staunch support to Panikkar from the Raja of Mahmudabad, the first Vice-Chancellor of the Aligarh Muslim University.

The relationship between Dr. Ziauddin and Panikkar was outwardly correct. But between them there never was any sympathy. Panikkar has made a note of this in his autobiography: "I came to know at a later period from no less a person than the Home Member of U.P. Government, the Rajah of Mahmudabad, that he had conveyed to the Government during the non-cooperation crisis that followed, that I was a crypto revolutionary".

Panikkar was a popular teacher at Aligarh. Among his students, who later distinguished themselves in public life and professions, were Zakir Hussain, K.G. Saiyidain, N.L. Ahmed, Syed Nurulla and Sarwar Hassan.

Jawaharlal Nehru has stated that "the MAO College failed to inspire its students with the kind of intellectual struggle that forces people to break out of the mould of past categories of thought, develop new sensibilities and social loyalties. For a nationalist and socialist, the ideology that Aligarh stood for, served only to frustrate a multitude of glorious aspirations. For many religious Muslims as well as Indian nationalists, Muslim identity as construed at Aligarh seemed shallow".

A significant book expressing his concern with politics of this period was *Imperialism*. This gave a foretaste of the ideas and doctrines that found elaboration later in his *Asia and Western Dominance*. Panikkar's interest in Indian history was aroused in a serious manner with his short but fruitful association with Vincent A. Smith, the author of *Oxford History of India*, first published in 1919. His profession also demanded an in-depth knowledge of India's history through the ages. Aligarh had, at that time, a good collection of authoritative books and other materials. The one that most attracted his attention was *Corpus Inscriptionum Indicanum*. It opened up his vision of Indian History in an intense manner. The detailed study of this valuable material enriched his already evident enthusiasm to write on matters relating to India's past. His maiden attempt in this area took concrete shape in 1922 as a short but standard monograph on Harsha Vardhana, entitled *Sri Harsha of Kanuj*.

Though far away from home State, his interest in Malayalam did not wane. He kept alive his intimacy with leading writers like Vallathol Narayana Menon, Kumaran Asan, Nalappat Narayana Menon and others. "During the 1920 vacation, I invited Vallathol, Nalappat, and Kundoor, to spend a few days at the Chalayil House. Before his return, Vallathol wanted to see a Kathakali performed in the local

style. My uncle arranged for a performance by prominent players like Mathur Kunju Pillai Panikkar, Thakazhi Ayyappan Pillai and Kunjan Panikkar. The now-celebrated Kalamandalam owned its conception to this performance." He was also in touch with editors of purposeful magazines like *Kavana Kaumudi*. He was convinced that a strong foundation of scholarship was essential for any effective contribution to his mother tongue. For this, one has to be conversant with the history of development of the language and its classics. With the ample leisure time available at Aligarh, he started on with *Lilathilakam*. This is a treatise in Malayalam of unknown authorship on *maniprava* forms of poetry, written sometime during the 14th-15th century. Scholars are not agreed on any particular period when it was written or as to who wrote it. *Manipravalam* is a harmonious mixture of Sanskrit (*Mani* means ruby) and Malayalam (*pravalam* is coral — pearl) to form an excellent vehicle for poetic sentiment. The author has given in *Lilathilakam* extensive quotations from works of earlier periods to trace, among other things, the growth and extent of the *Maniprava* style. For anyone who aspires to have an idea of the history and development of Malayalam language, a study of *Lilathilakam* is unavoidable. From the time he heard Barrister K.P. Padmanabha Pillai recite some stanzas from it while he was schooling in Thiruvananthapuram, Panikkar was seized with the desire to study *Lilathilakam* for what it is worth. Along with this, he started on the voyage of discovery of the history of the language, with a detailed study of the works of two brothers, popularly known as Kannassa Panikkars. The works so far discovered belong to three poets who were of the same *tharavad*, in Niranam, a place near Thiruvalla in Central Kerala.

In his efforts to have first-hand knowledge of the early history of Malayalam based on the works of value in different branches that were predominant during the respective periods,

Panikkar familiarised himself with the most important works of *Kathakali*, *Champu*, *Sandesa Kavyas*, etc.

*Dorassani*, a product of the Aligarh period, and inspired by '*Madame Bovary*', pictures some tragi-comic sequences in the life of a pseudo-fashionable Malayali girl, who accepts certain westernised norms of behaviour. It attracted some attention at the time of publication. But Panikkar himself had no high opinion about it. Diligent readers too will agree with his assessment noted in its preface: "It is not even a story. What I have attempted is merely to study, with some care, a critical phase in the psychological development of a sensitive and romantic girl brought up under unreal circumstances of an English school training. The heroine has none of the characteristics generally associated with heroines in fiction. She is not a paragon of beauty or of virtue. She is more or less an ordinary girl, certain bad points of whose character had been developed precociously by the training she received." The book was published eight years after it was written without any alteration, even though the author felt it could be improved and its lesson made more effective.

Two other works of Panikkar, *Swaroopam* and *Parankipadayali*, a translation of *King Lear*, also deserve mention here. A play based on the story of *Noorjahan* was another work of this time. Here, he followed the pattern prevalent at that time, both in content and in form, resulting in an average product. A poem written at Aligarh was later included in a compilation under the title *Premageethi*. It was a recreation of an episode from the life of Gandhari, from *Mahabharatha*.

The Muslim Anglo-Oriental College matured itself into Aligarh Muslim University in 1920. Madhava Panikkar was there on its staff. The ambition of its founder, Sir Sayyid Ahmed Khan was thus fulfilled almost 45 years after its



founding. Panikkar was elevated as the Head of the Department of History of the College, when the old incumbent left to take up his appointment in Dacca. He also became the University Professor in due course. In spite of all these happy developments, he was feeling that prospects in Aligarh was not that bright. It was better to look for greener pastures. Also, there were persons in power in the University, who were suspicious about his integrity. After three years and a few months of service, he resigned before the summer vacation in 1922 and left Aligarh in July. His well wisher and good friend, Rajah of Mahmudabad, had previously persuaded Panikkar to accept a posting in the University of Lucknow. The Raja negotiated on his own in this regard on the terms for his friend. This firm assurance was there with Panikkar when he left M.A.O. College for home.

The political situation in the country also had changed with the Muslim masses gradually getting away from the national agitation as the Khilafat movement became irrelevant. But a considerable number of forward looking Muslim leaders continued to show interest in national affairs.

## MADRAS

ON his way back home, Panikkar spent a few days at Madras. His ambition to take up journalism as a profession was lying dormant in his mind all these years. He met some old friends while in Madras. Among them was G.V. Kripanidhi, a staunch nationalist. Kripanidhi had given up a promising career at the bar at the call of Mahatma Gandhi. After serving in Jamia Millia for three months, he came to *Swarajya* as its Manager. *Swarajya* was a nationalist daily established by the veteran leader, T. Prakasam. At the instance of Kripanidhi, Panikkar met Prakasam, and readily accepted the offer to join *Swarajya* as its Joint Editor. His long-cherished dream of a career in journalism was thus realised. It was his belief that a career in the fourth estate was a means to meaningfully participate in great causes and thus help them forward. He had taken the plunge. After this firm commitment, he went to Kavalam for a brief vacation.

Madhava Panikkar had from early days a keen interest in the mass media. His contact and relationship with newspapers and journals started when he was a student in the Madras Christian College, Madras. His articles in Malayalam on topics of literary interest began to appear in *Deepika*, Kottayam. This interest he pursued with vigour in later years even while he was at Oxford. His contributions in English too, were accepted by magazines without difficulty. His debut as an author was the result of his participation in an essay competition, about which mention has already been made. It had a direct bearing on his career also. What acted as a further fillip to his career was a lengthy article by him in *Modern Review* published from Calcutta and edited by Ramanand Chatterjee, entitled "The Future of Indian States." He elaborated it later, when he was editor of *The Hindustan*

*Times*, New Delhi, into a book, *The Relations of the Government of India with the Indian States*.

Back home, Panikkar's people were not happy with his decision to leave a good job for one wrought with risk and uncertainty. Though his uncle did not openly express his displeasure, others minced no words. Some well-wishers such as Dr. Pandalai, came out openly against it. When the Raja of Mahmudabad was informed about Panikkar's decision to join *Swarajya*, he wrote, "Your decision to take up editorship of a nationalist newspaper seems to me, in the case of a youngman of your promise, to be a step of danger. You know the position of newspapers in India, especially of nationalist newspapers. Apart from the very considerable financial handicaps, there is no stability in the profession".

*Swarajya* was managed by a limited company, registered for this purpose, in which Prakasam had a major interest. The share capital was Rs. three lakhs and the public enthusiastically purchased the shares, out of respect for its promoter. Prakasam was a man of simple habits and practically spent nothing on himself but tried hard, through donations, to keep *Swarajya* alive. In spite of the remarkable hold it had on the affections of the public, the paper failed. As Khasa Subba Rao recalls, "*Swarajya* filled into the need of the time and it rendered, while it lasted, a service unsurpassed to the cause of journalism." Panikkar was able to raise it to a level, which it did not reach earlier or later. He was with *Swarajya* for a salary of Rs. 700/- but as the paper was not self-supporting, it had yet to pay a few months salary when he left. He left it, according to one source, as he could not hit it off with Mr. Srinivasa Iyengar.

While Panikkar was on the staff of *Swarajya*, he went to Kakinada for the annual session of the Indian National Congress presided over by Maulana Mohammed Ali. This was

not only to report on the session but also for another purpose. T.K. Madhavan, a leader of eminence especially of the Ezhavas, working for their all round progress, had requested for assistance for introduction to prominent leaders of the Congress, for seeking their help in the movement for eradication of untouchability and other evils prevalent in Travancore. He had already an idea of starting some agitation to ensure freedom of passage on roads near temples for the untouchables. Panikkar promised help and went with T.K. Madhavan to Kakinada. He was able to introduce Madhavan to Mohamed Ali and others, who took up the matter with all earnestness. These and other consultations paved the way for finally deciding upon the Vaikom Satyagraha which got the approval of Mahatma Gandhi also. Vaikom Satyagraha is a major milestone in the attempts made for arousing public conscience against discriminatory practices followed in the name of religious tradition. The Kerala Pradesh Congress Committee took the initiative to pass a resolution for the organisation of an untouchability eradication committee and appointed K. Kelappan as its secretary. The First agitation organised under Kerala Pradesh Congress Committee was Vaikom Satyagraha which began in February 1924 and ended after about twenty months.

The Kerala Pradesh Congress Committee held their second annual session at Palghat in August 1923. A number of distinguished leaders of the national movement participated in it. Sarojini Naidu presided over the political session in which C. Rajagopalachari, Devadas Gandhi, and Beevi Amma, mother of Ali Brothers, were present. As part of this session, a literary conference was also arranged which was chaired by Panikkar. He travelled down to Palghat in the company of Sarojini Naidu and others. They stayed for three days at Athazha Chira, K.P. Kesava Menon's *tharavad* in Palghat. Panikkar was able to establish instant rapport with



Sarojini Naidu. His earliest contacts with Mrs. Naidu took place in England, when he was at Oxford. He had met her sister Mrinalini Chatopadhyaya also, while she was in England studying in Cambridge. Mrinalini was in Madras staying with her sisters, Sunalini and Suhasini and her brother Harindranath Chattopadhyaya. Their residence used to be the meeting-place of the elite of Madras as the "Centre of new life on whose outer margin appeared such leading lights as C.P. Ramaswami Aiyar, C.R. Reddi, Prof. Candeth and many others." It was here that Kamaladevi, then a widow and student of Queen Mary's College, Madras, met Harindranath. This meeting ultimately ended in their marriage. Some more unconventional marriages took place between some of the active members of the group, which gave rise to some lively gossip in society circles in Madras. Panikkar has referred to this in his autobiography. "These romances had already cast a shadow on the salon when I joined the *Swarajya*. But the circle was still functioning."

As Panikkar was not a stranger to Madras, he was able to revitalise old contacts and establish new ones with ease. There were some people like Dr. Pandalai, who maintained a live and cordial relationship with Panikkar's brother. Those working in newspapers in Madras looked upon Panikkar with a certain amount of jealousy. The bureaucrats viewed his activities with suspicion and mistrust. The investigative reporting estranged some important people. The abrupt termination of his service as Joint Editor is an indication of the pressure that came to be exercised by these groups on the management of *Swarajya*. The Governor Willingdon himself was deeply displeased by Panikkar's writings. On the whole, his people, including his uncle, were unhappy with his work and wanted him to dissociate himself with the paper. It produced more enemies than friends for him at that time.

## AMRITSAR

**P**ANIKKAR got the first opportunity to work in close co-operation with leaders of the Indian National Congress when he was directed by Mahatma Gandhi to take up the responsibility to run the Akali Sahayak Bureau at Amritsar.

The Working Committee of the Congress held on 25 and 26 November 1923 at Sabarmati, discussed the Akali situation in the Punjab. They resolved that the attack made by the Government on Shiromani Gurudwara Prabandhak Committee and Akali Dal, is a direct challenge to the right of free association of all Indians for non-violent activities.... It also was of opinion that an Akali Sahayak Committee consisting of twenty-eight members with power to co-opt, be appointed to do effective propaganda all over the country regarding the Akali situation and render necessary assistance including financial aid to the Akalis. The Akali Sahayak Committee was empowered to raise a special fund in order to render financial assistance deemed necessary. The committee of 28 included, among others, Sarojini Naidu, C. Rajagopalachari, T. Prakasam, Jawaharlal Nehru, Lajpat Rai, Rajendra Prasad, Ali Brothers, George Joseph and others.

The responsibilities of the Congress Akali Sahayak Bureau were mainly:

(i) Ordinary publicity work, issuing communique etc., to the press, (2) remaining in close touch with Shiromani Gurudwara Prabandhak Committee, and (3) getting statements of eyewitnesses, etc., of the Jaito tragedy.

Earlier on 21 February 1924, there occurred a tragic police firing on a crowd at Jaito in Nabha State. People collected there peacefully to worship and to protest against the deposition of Maharaja Ripudaman Singh Malavendra

Bahadur who was the ruler of that State. It was reported that 150 persons were killed and about 55 wounded. The work of the Congress Akali Sahayak Bureau at Amritsar was to find out the facts connected with this incident also. The work was to be carried on in as quiet a manner as possible without any fuss or show.

Panikkar proceeded promptly to Amritsar from Bombay on Sunday 16 March 1924. He was to replace Pandit Karamchand Shukla, who was there after Gidwani's arrest, as a part of the arrangement made by the Punjab Congress Committee, based on earlier instruction. To avoid any embarrassment or misunderstanding due to the upsetting of their arrangements, Nehru wrote a "soothing letter" and cast the responsibility chiefly on Mohammed Ali. A press statement was also issued. "In view of Mr. George Joseph's inability to go to Amritsar owing to his wife's illness, Maulana Mohammed Ali, President of the AICC has, in consultation with Mahatma Gandhi, appointed Mr. Panikkar to take charge of the Congress Akali Sahayak Bureau in Amritsar. Mr. Panikkar an M.A. (First Class Honours) of Oxford, was a Professor at the Muslim University, Aligarh and has till lately been editor of *Swarajya of Madras*".

Nehru had already written to Panikkar that no frequent reports from him were expected but communiques were to be forwarded to keep the AICC informed of his activities. Personal letters giving special news of events which have not appeared in the press, were also considered necessary as they could be appropriately used, if found necessary and beneficial, for detailed discussions on men and matters, in the Working Committee. So far as the publicity work was concerned, he was left free to take any action deemed fit to give correct facts on the Akali agitation, and also to keep the political side of it well in the forefront.

Panikkar was immensely pleased with the outcome of his first political assignment. Soon the Sikhs started to negotiate and the Government showed no reluctance about conceding their demands. Thus Panikkar's mission was over and he was free to turn to other activities. Nehru, in his letter dated 30 July 1924, addressed to Maulana Mohammed Ali, reported, based on a printed notice about the starting of *Hindustan Times*, that Panikkar had evidently decided to leave Akali Sahayak Bureau and take up editorship of that paper. Nehru also felt that the Sahayak Bureau need not continue after his departure.

In conclusion, it may be mentioned that in 1925 the Government of India had to agree to the reasonable demands of the reformist Sikhs, the Akalis, and passed the necessary legislation — The Sikh Gurudwara Act III of 1925. It recognised the authority of the Shiromani Gurudwara Prabandhak Committee to administer the affairs of the Gurudwaras, with elected bodies replacing the *mahants*.

While at Amritsar, Panikkar read, during his spare time, an old classic, *Nalacharitam Champu*, which inspired him to write a burlesque, in a similar but lighter vein, entitled *Panki Parinayam* (Panki's Marriage). Among his substantial and varied works in Malayalam, *Panki Parinayam* is a parody of the romances in verse, which old fashioned poets were continuing to write. It incorporates elements of social satire also. Among the guests who come for the wedding are Vallathol Narayana Menon and Ulloor S. Parameswara Iyer, "the latter coming in for some ungentle handling". This work was in private circulation in manuscript form for about twelve years before it was printed.



## NEW DELHI

**T**HOUGH in the third and fourth decades of the 20th century there had been a number of press regulations promulgated in India curbing the freedom of newspapers and journals, there was, indeed, a substantial increase in the number of such publications. "During the war period (1914-18) Delhi's first newspaper, *The Delhi Mail*, made a feeble start and went out of existence in 1923. In the following year, *The Hindustan Times* made its appearance as an Akali paper with a Congress slant. It was edited by K.M. Panikkar. The funds were provided by the Akalis and the Maharaja of Nabha, who at that time was anxious to have himself reinstated as the ruler of the state." The Maharaja assisted the paper financially to further his interests, which was obvious.

Even while Panikkar was at Amritsar, Sardar Mangal Singh had initiated discussions with him on the prospects and possibilities of starting a newspaper. The matter became more important, as it was certain that Panikkar's assignment would be over within a few months. Sardar Mangal Singh and Panikkar, when discussing what the newspaper should be called, were offered the alternative of *Sikh Samachar* and *Delhi Times*. Both of them rejected these names for the reason that the former would narrow its outlook and purpose and the latter limit its range to Delhi. Finally, it was agreed to have the mast-head, *The Hindustan Times* because in North India, the country was better known as Hindustan than either India or Bharat.

Mangal Singh and Panikkar decided that *The Hindustan Times* should be an evening paper, as most dailies were in those days and that it should have twelve pages and be priced at six paise. "Like me", Shri Mangal Singh said in an informal chat in June 1974 in Chandigarh, where he was residing,

"Panikkar was totally ignorant of the business side of the newspaper and thought Rs. one lakh should be sufficient to run it." This money itself was received from friends in the U.S. when Mangal Singh sought this badly needed help for the cause. In fact, he had some previous experience, as he was for a period put in charge of two daily newspapers, *Akali*, in Urdu and in Gurumukhi. Despite persistent persecution by the regime of Sir Malcolm Hailey, the Governor, the two newspapers continued to exist. Since they had only limited appeal, the idea of a newspaper in English to serve the nationalist cause was taken up seriously. Mangal Singh's project was to have it published at Chandigarh. But the convincing points put up by Panikkar persuaded him to have it from Delhi. He visited Delhi for preliminary arrangements but was disappointed to see that no printing press worth the name was willing to undertake the job. He consulted Asaf Ali and Lala Shankar Lal among others and ultimately decided to set up a press. He took on rent a building on Burn Bastion Road, off Lahori Gate, now called Sharadhanand Bazaar. A printing press purchased from Calcutta was installed there. In August 1924, Mangal Singh called in Panikkar to take charge of the paper. M.P. Menon, an uncle of the doyen of journalists, the late Edathatta Narayanan, was its first publisher.

*The Hindustan Times* was formally inaugurated by Mahatma Gandhi on 15 September 1924. Mangal Singh requested Gandhiji, who was then staying with Maulana Mohammed Ali in Kucha Chelan, to perform the opening ceremony. The first issue of the paper, expected to be available that evening, was postponed for another week, owing to the unexpected breakdown of its printing machinery. In declaring the press open, Mahatma Gandhi said, that it was not without hesitation that he accepted the invitation of Sardar Mangal Singh to perform the opening ceremony, holding as he did very strongly that under the prevalent conditions of the

country, he would, if he could, stop all newspapers except *Young India*. But his intense love for the Sikhs tempted him to accept the invitation. The Sikhs' position to-day was full of difficulty and all that he would ask them to do was to have unflinching faith in God. He trusted that the paper beginning under such good auspices, would prove worthy of the responsible profession and be conducted with truth, tact and fearlessness. It was a religious venture and he hoped that nothing would compromise their great watch word, *Sat Sri Akal*. Every word and sentence published in the paper should be weighed. There should not only be any untrue statements but no *suggestio falsi* or *suppressio veri*. Truth and love of sacrifice was what their religion taught and he hoped that the journal would carry it out in its service to the Sikhs and India, under the able and competent editorship of Mr. K.M. Panikkar and the guidance of men like Sardar Mangal Singh. Maulana Mohammed Ali spoke briefly next, after which guests were served sweets and fruits. The first issue of *The Hindustan Times* priced at six paise came out on 23 September 1924.

"The first number of *The Hindustan Times* was published this evening"—reported *The Leader*, Allahabad, under the date-line 25, September with the heading — "Birth of Nationalist Daily", with a number of messages from leaders of all parties. In the course of a leading article, "Ourselves", the paper summarises its policy as standing for the wide principle of nationalism and rigorously to exclude all partisan views. In its support, it includes all, not excepting domiciled Europeans. Thus "the only nationalist paper in north India" was launched with welcome from leaders and the public.

After the press installation was over, and the workmen were given some basic training, Panikkar settled down to undertake his job of projecting the nationalist cause. The British propaganda in England and the U.S.A. was organised

on an intense and systematic basis. The infamous Sir Michael O' Dwyer and Lord Sydenham, former Governor of Bombay, were mounting a formidable case against Indian nationalist aspirations and its leaders. *The Hindustan Times* published the entire article that appeared in *Current History*, the American magazine, which gave a distorted view of the situation in India, before rebutting its points editorially. Some idea of the type of propaganda indulged in, can be had from reading Sydenham's article. Commenting editorially, Panikkar complained that this kind of writing "showed the way in which anti-Indian propaganda is being conducted. The lucubration of the dug-out peer, was a tissue of falsehood, relieved only by a few facts, however, quite irrelevant in their nature. Our readers could have seen from the circular of the joint editors that they were very anxious to broadcast the mischievous outpourings of the ex-satrap's heart and were willing to undertake the expense of distributing 25,000 copies in addition to paying for being appraised of the names of receptive individuals. Indians will have a suspicion as to the anxiety of the publishers to assume what must be deemed an extraordinary and unprofitable expenditure. It would be interesting to know whether the revenues of India feed in any measure these enterprises."

The Anglo-Indian Press, for ever praising the benefits of British rule, had to be put in its place. Here is a comment in "The Topics of the Day" column under the heading, '*The Pioneer and Manners*' "He who wrote manners maketh the man forget to add — 'both coloured and white'. Excusably, therefore, *The Pioneer* interprets it as having been intended for the sole and undisputed benefit of the 'native' and the 'nigger'. Anglo-Indian journals have called Indian patriots villains and worse: Mahatma Gandhi, the Idol of a people, has been traduced and vilified, without any perturbation on the part of our meticulous Allahabad contemporary. But it



cannot contain itself when Viceroy is referred to as Reading and holds forth on the bad breeding of those who write in 'extremist prints'. It is unnecessary to retort about the breeding of persons who write in this strain. But we are amused at the thin-skinned resentment which detects grievous offence in His Excellency merely being called 'Reading'. It is very hard to have to speak in every line of His Excellency Rufus Daniel Isaacs, Earl Reading, etc., etc. It is absurd to see insult where none is intended, and certainly illustrates the stupidity which lays store by formidable lengths''.

Communalists and loyalists of the Raj too did not escape the sting of Panikkar's pen. *The Hindustan Times* made a sarcastic comment when Sir Mohammed Habibulla was appointed member of the Viceroy's Executive Council under the caption 'All Wrong'. *The Muslim Outlook* says Sir M. Habibulla is 'a brilliant member of the provincial civil service who passed his whole career in official routine'. All wrong. He is a first or second-grade pleader. He was made chairman of the Vellore municipality. The Willingdon-Rajagopalachari (note: this should be C.P. Ramaswamy Aiyer) regime discovered this genius who was wasting his brilliance and foistered him on the Madras Executive Council for a temporary period. The expiry of the term found him moved into the commissionership of the Madras Corporation, also a well-paid job. Then again he was drafted into the Madras Executive Council. He toured the country 'as a brother Royal Commissioner' to adopt Mr. M.M. Samarth's phraseology — of Lord Lee of Fareham and his conferee. When the exacting duties of the function were over, he went back to his Executive Council. Now he is coming higher up."

To prove the hollowness of the adverse publicity indulged in by loyalists of the Raj, the facts about the conditions before the advent of British rule were presented

whenever an opportunity arose. *The Hindustan Times* published, for example, a piece which was an article by Mr. C.F. Andrews in the *Modern Review* of Calcutta: "Outside the Kashmiri Gate there were very few houses or roads. The site of the present large railway station inside the city was one of the most thickly populated areas of old Delhi. What is now cleared away, as a great open space for Military purposes, between the Fort and the great mosque was filled with houses of the middle-classes, along with a sprinkling of the nobility attached to the Moghul Court. During the second quarter of the century, from 1830-1850, when the 'English Peace' as it was called, was firmly established, there was great prosperity in the city and the common people shared in that prosperity. The rate of wheat was about forty seers to the rupee and ghee four seers to the rupee.'

Panikkar had a chance to work as Gandhiji's emissary. This was during the twenty-one day purificatory fast Mahatmaji undertook in Delhi. He was to carry the views of the Mahatma on the case of Maharaja Ripudaman Singh of Nabha to the Swaraj Party which was in session at Calcutta. He was considered as a fit person to meet C.R. Das and Motilalji and convey the factual findings of this case. When he met them, he was assured by the two leaders that they were not interested to support the Maharaja and he returned with that assurance. While in Calcutta, Panikkar met Mahakavi Tagore at his family mansion. The poet wanted Panikkar to inform Gandhiji that he had to go to South America immediately, due to a prior commitment. It was only out of that compulsion that he was leaving and not because he was unaware of the gravity of the situation in India. He asked Panikkar to tell Gandhiji not to misunderstand him on this account. Panikkar carried the message from Gurudev to Gandhiji which he quoted for readers of *The Hindustan Times*. The message was crisp, cryptic and characteristic of Tagore — "This is what I

have to say to India now; don't be misled by personalities and forget the truth."

It is relevant and interesting to say that Rabindra Bhavan records of Viswa Bharathi do not contain any reference to such exchanges between Tagore and Panikkar. No letter either of Tagore or Panikkar is available in the Rabindra Bhavan file. This is mentioned as a footnote in a book on Panikkar by Dr. Tarashankar Banerji.

C.F. Andrews was a regular contributor to *The Hindustan Times* on various topics of general interest. Special mention may be made of his articles on opium.

*The Hindustan Times* had its share in controversial matters of public interest. An instance in point is the alleged interference of the Resident, C.H.C. Cotton, in Travancore. After making appropriate enquiries and ascertaining facts, *The Hindustan Times* published them under the heading "Cotton Epidemic in Travancore". Cotton wanted somehow to stop Panikkar from attacking him and persuaded some Nair officials, who were friends of his uncle, to influence him. While he was on a visit to Kavalam, his uncle told him that it would be unwise to make such attacks. He was persuaded to leave the newspaper and return home to manage family affairs. Panikkar agreed to resign the editorship in six months' time.

There were also occasions that provided a lot of comic relief in the functioning of the daily. An instance in point is the apologetic piece carried in it — "Among many trials of a newspaper office, the pranks played by the printer's devil are really superlatively disconcerting. The mischievous imp sometimes betrays the journalists into amusing blunders but there are occasions, as happened to us yesterday, when the misfortune is more serious. Unknown to us a headline 'Sudanese mutineers fired upon' became 'Sudanese ministers

fired upon'. Need we say that we did not seek to club mutineers and ministers in one category!"

The problems Panikkar faced were immense from the beginning. Skilled persons even to operate the printing press, from compositors to foremen, were then in short supply in Delhi. But he was fortunate to have in the person of G.S. Raghavan, a sincere and devoted Assistant Editor, who was a remarkable man. He left a lasting impression on all those who had met him. There was little in the field of journalism that he did not know. Raghavan was to Panikkar more than a first-rate journalist; he was also a dependable friend with only one major defect which was his extravagance. Raghavan died in 1937 at Lahore as a result of injuries sustained in a car accident.

There was another assistant, Dr. Ambadi Krishna Menon, a man of spotless character, unselfish and utterly devoted. He was known to Panikkar from his Oxford days and joined *The Hindustan Times* at the special invitation of Panikkar. Because of his deep scholarship, detachment, and commendable objectivity, Menon's opinion was much sought after and valued.

Chaman Lal was one of the earliest to join *The Hindustan Times*. While he was working in Lajpat Rai's Urdu paper *Bandemataram*, he was asked by Panikkar to join in. These are Chaman Lal's own words describing the episode: "I told him, I know nothing of English journalism but he replied it was his business to see that I worked in an English newspaper. In July 1924, he sent me a telegram asking me to join *The Hindustan Times*. So I was actually appointed two months before the paper was started. I remember the day when Gandhiji performed the opening ceremony".

Though the authorities were not favourably disposed towards the paper, it was able to capture attention through its



frank and free views. On 1 January 1925, it thanked its readers for their support and promised improvements. It was steadily becoming an influential factor in Indian politics. Despite all these, the paper itself was incurring losses. By March 1925 the newspaper had new owners and before the end of the year, a new editor and a new manager.

There were two main reasons for the transfer of ownership. The one was continuing loss suffered by the paper and the steadily declining Akali interest in projecting their cause, now that most of their demands had been met by the British authorities. The second was the surfacing of acute differences between the Swarajist party led by Pandit Motilal Nehru and C.R. Das, and the forces of Hindu orthodoxy and militancy represented by Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya and Lala Lajpat Rai, both factions needing publicity. About the first reason, Panikkar has stated in his Autobiography: "the conciliation talks between the Government and the Sikh leaders had succeeded by February 1925. Thereafter, they had little interest in running *The Hindustan Times*." And Sardar Mangal Singh described the paper at that time as a 'white elephant'.

Now that it was decided to sell *The Hindustan Times*, the Sikh leaders looked for prospective buyers. It was hardly likely that the paper would be bought as a business proposition. Only those who were interested in propagating a wide nationalist cause were likely to show interest in acquiring a daily newspaper. But the nationalist cause was split.

On 19 February 1925, the *Abhyudaya* carried the news item: "A new company of *The Hindustan Times* has been formed with Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya as Chairman. The Directors are Lala Lajpat Rai, Raja Narendra Nath, M.R. Jayakar, G.D. Birla, Lala Sukhvin Singh and Lala Baijnath

Saya". On March 18, under "Topics of the Day", the paper carried this piece: "*Hindustan Times* has changed hands. The proprietors have sold it to Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya. Lala Lajpat Rai has agreed to associate himself with management and control of the paper. It is hardly necessary to say that every effort will be made to improve the paper. Steps have already been taken to strengthen the staff on the editorial and managerial side, but it will necessarily take sometime to effect all the improvements that are desired."

From 20 March 1925 onwards, Lala Lajpat Rai started a series of articles entitled the "Political Situation" which emphasised the view-point of the Malaviya group of Congressmen. Panikkar was more or less certain that he may not be able to carry on long in the changed circumstances and desired to resign. "When I consulted Gandhiji and Mohammed Ali, they advised me that I should quit only if there was an immediate and sufficient provocation". In any case, he did not have to wait long. He has noted in his Autobiography — "Such an occasion arose within a month. Malaviyaji called one of my assistants to do some work. I warned the junior that the next time he carried out orders from the owners without referring it to me and securing my concurrence, I would take disciplinary action against him. Malaviyaji felt I should not have used such a threat. Straightaway I resigned and left Delhi the next day." The assistant was M. N. Tholal, who "had a vitriolic pen and a vitriolic tongue". He was considered to be a protege of Pandit Malaviya.

The resignation did not go unnoticed by the Indian press. It became a topic of debate and the stand taken by Panikkar was largely endorsed by many of the papers. Maulana Mohamed Ali was more vocal than most of them. He wrote in his journal, *Comrade*: "We do not know any important daily newspapers which owes practically everything,

finance of course excepted — to the labours of one man and yet with regard to the establishment of *The Hindustan Times*. K.M. Panikkar could well say like Coriolanus, "Alone I did it". This is no reflection on the sub-editorial talent. But gathering together of a very competent staff of assistants which means more than half the battle, was also the work of Panikkar himself and the love and loyalty with which he had inspired the staff was nothing more than a reflection of his own unfailing love and loyalty. People say of his editorship of *The Hindustan Times* that nothing in life became him as well as the leaving of it. For we understand that he has left the editorial charge of the paper by reason of his insistence on the recognition of the undoubted rights and unrestricted authority of the Editor in his own sphere in the economy of a journal. To Mr. Panikkar a change in the proprietorship of the paper meant and could mean, no change in the editorial policy and that, no doubt, accounts for the absence of all reference to this matter in the editorial columns even after it began to be announced in another part of the paper that it was now conducted under the management and control of Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya and Lala Lajpat Rai."

Though Panikkar had heard much about the distinguished and highly respected Malaviyaji for many years earlier, it was only when he became owner of *The Hindustan Times* that he came in close personal contact with him. Malaviyaji was a person of spotless character and was universally respected. As Panikkar has mentioned, no one can deny that he was a profoundly good man, almost a *maharshi*. Nor can anyone forget his services to Indians and to *Sanathanadharma*. In the words of Mahatma Gandhi "there is no one who has that power of service which he commands."

The other person of the management was Lala Lajpat Rai. Panikkar felt it difficult to appreciate him, right from the time of their first acquaintance in England. According to

Panikkar, this self-styled lion of the Punjab was the embodiment of egoism, a schemer with a deception of simplicity. Whatever was the reason for this strange equation between Panikkar and Lajpat Rai, his statement cannot alter the assessment of Dr. Pattabhi of the personality and contributions of Lalaji: "His sustained interest in politics and social service easily gave him a foremost place not only in Punjab but in the whole of India." As philanthropists and social reformers, Malaviyaji and Lalaji had common objectives and found themselves in the managing body of *The Hindustan Times*. Panikkar was not happy with this association.

An event of significance that occurred during his stay at Delhi deserves special mention. It was a matter that awakened his interest in Kerala history. A pioneering attempt in presenting facts on the early history of Kerala by a scholar of eminence and man of letters of merit, K.P. Padmanabha Menon, resulted in *History of Kerala* in three volumes. T.K. Krishna Menon, who edited and published the work, suggested that Panikkar review the same for some of the prominent journals and newspapers.

Jacobus Canter Visscher, Chapllin at Cochin (1517-23), wrote a series of twenty-two memoirs, by a desire to relate the veracious circumstances of which he was himself an eye-witness or which he had heard from trustworthy persons. His observations bear only upon the manners and customs of people in this part of the world, their laws, rites and ceremonies, the description of their kingdoms as well as their origin and their modes of government and other similar subjects. K.P. Padmanabha Menon took these letters of Visscher as a thread on which to string the ancient history of Kerala. It was, indeed, a great undertaking of Menon's life and was completed long before 1910. He had the full equipment for a historian: thirst for knowledge, truth, mental training and unflagging patience. With these qualities in abundance,



Menon was able to produce a Kerala History of great merit. The great literary historian and poet-scholar, Ulloor S. Parameswara Iyer, has recorded about the book: "It has always struck me that *Visscher's Letters from Malabar*, so accurate and comprehensive, is worthy of being made the basement for large historical edifice and I am glad that my late lamented friend thought likewise and gave it such perfect practical shape. Mr. Padmanabha Menon has laid the whole of Kerala under deep debt of obligation by this book, which only a scholar of his encyclopaedic knowledge and indefatigable energy could have commenced and completed".

The first volume of the book was reviewed by Panikkar for *Modern Review*, Calcutta and *The Hindu*, Madras. He said that despite its merits, the book could claim to be a comprehensive approach to Kerala history. Though it was an invaluable source-book for researchers, according to him, it was a disappointment as a real work of history.

T.K. Krishna Menon, the editor of the work, wrote to Panikkar that it was easy for critics to repudiate the efforts of dedicated scholars, but difficult to practise the precepts they preach. This was especially true of *History of Kerala*. Panikkar considered this an open expression of challenge to produce historical works of value.

Mention was made in an earlier chapter about a book on the "Indian States" which was in fact a more detailed exposition of an article published in the *Modern Review*, Calcutta. The book was completed in April 1925, within a period of approximately four months. In this effort, Panikkar received invaluable help and suggestions from Dr. Ambadi Krishna Menon. Though the book itself was published only in 1927, it may be treated as a product of this period, when he was with *The Hindustan Times*.

## EUROPE

**A**FTER his resignation from *The Hindustan Times*, Panikkar was almost in the doldrums. His uncle was happy at the termination of his insecure career of journalism. But there were still inducements from important people to lead him back to the same field. No less a person than Motilal Nehru invited Panikkar to join him, as he (Nehru) was seriously considering the idea of a paper of his own in Delhi. But nothing came of it.

While on a short visit to Madras, he met Dr. Krishnan Pandalai, who said that it was not too late for a man like Panikkar to venture into new projects of promise. He wanted Panikkar to study for law, and the sincerity with which the proposal was made, moved Panikkar deeply. Hence he readily agreed to go to England, subject to his uncle's approval. He requested Dr. Pandalai to recommend his case to his uncle for a final decision. This was done and Panikkar was advised by his uncle also to go to England at the earliest and complete the prestigious law course. With the help of an old friend, V.T. Krishnamachari, the then Law Secretary to the Government of Madras, he could get his travel documents expedited. He reached London on 27 September 1925. In due course, he enrolled himself at the Middle Temple. He wanted to earn as much as he could and made up his mind to seriously cultivate connections with newspapers and periodicals of repute. This was also done to foster his love of journalism. Surprisingly, he was invited to be an examiner in Indian history for the Indian Civil Service candidates, which provided a supplementary income. He contributed to *Daily News*, *Daily Herald* and other journals to help keep the pot boiling.

It was during this time that Panikkar finalised arrangements

for the publication of his work on Indian Native States. The manuscript, which was ready when he left *The Hindustan Times* was with him. He had very high hopes of this book, as it was the first attempt by an Indian to approach the subject in a thorough and objective manner. But his initial efforts proved disappointing as the publishers returned the manuscript. The book came out finally after a full year under the title *An Introduction to the Study of the Relations of Indian States with the Government of India*.

In the foreword, Rt. Hon. Lord Oliver indicated that the author had the twin qualities of high academic distinction and experience as a journalist. It was, indeed, produced at a very opportune moment. The book was both admirably arranged and developed and lucidly, concisely and pleasantly written. Lord Oliver also praised the book since it exhibited, with remarkable wealth of historical reference and a judicious exercise of discrimination, the extreme complexity of the questions involved in the problems of incorporating the native States with the system of a Central Government. The Foreword clearly pointed out that the book afforded a most valuable and suggestive survey of the entire ground dealt with, both in its historical and constitutional aspects.

In his Introduction Panikkar has mentioned that Sir William Lee Warner was the only writer of any consequence, who had attempted to deal with the problem of Indian States. Warner was a member of the Indian Civil Service and was naturally much impressed by the Roman analogy and pushed it to the length of claiming for the paramount power unlimited right of authority over the Indian States. Panikkar's endeavour was merely to present facts and to analyse, as best as he could, the political system that is built on them.

One interesting fact of special significance Panikkar has indicated, is the almost total absence of communal antagonism

in the native States, except that which is directly encouraged and imported from British India. Village life was vigorous and there was almost undisturbed social harmony.

As Dr. A.D.A. De Kat Angelino in his book has noted, "Panikkar reminds us of the seamy side of some Princes' lives, of the degraded luxury and meaningless pomp of many Indian courts, which he calls the result of the lack of direct responsibility in the princes'. In many States the most elementary rights are denied to the subjects, whose political position is anomalous and lacks the ordinary guarantees of a free man's life."

On the other hand, Panikkar said, "The States and their rulers have been custodians of our culture and artistic tradition in a degree that we cannot appreciate now. The very conservatism of the rulers has been of value in this connection. In the midst of a changing and disintegrating society, their States have in many cases preserved the solidarity of the social structure and kept intact the imperceptible bonds that unite classes and castes into one community.... Village life is vigorous, and there is almost undisturbed social harmony. This obviously is not due either to efficient administration — for in many States such a thing is unknown — or as a result of a purposive policy, for the rulers in many cases, unfortunately, have only their pleasures and their sport at heart. A more fundamental cause is found in the fact that society has continued practically undisturbed in these areas, while in British India new currents of life and new and changing political and social conditions have tended to disorganise and render ineffective the unseen forces behind the structure of the community. This is certainly not all to our advantage, for progress can come only through purposive evolution, and a static society must tend to weigh down both individuality and activity through the weight of encrusted



custom. But all the same, a conservative tradition has much in its favour, especially in the midst of a society which is changing fast through the contact of dissimilar culture. Moreover, to a large extent, the States have served the cause of India's civilization by acting as a refuge of certain valuable forms of intellectual activity which, through one circumstance or another, could not find adequate support in British India."

This book had great impact on the career of Panikkar. The controversy whipped up by the letter of Viceroy, Lord Reading, to his Exalted Highness, the Nizam of Hyderabad, was very much in the air. The Princes were unhappy. In spite of their claims of sovereignty, in matters relating to the domestic affairs of their States, they were shown their place by the forthright statement of the Viceroy. The Chamber of Princes and its Chancellor Maharaja Bhupendra Singh and other prominent members of the committee deputed Col. K.N. Haksar, then Minister in Gwalior, and Rashbrook Williams, Foreign Minister of Patiala, to consult the best lawyers on the questions. By a stroke of luck, Panikkar's *Relations of Indian States with Government of India* came out at that time. He had already forwarded an advance proof copy of the book to Col. Haksar. The episode is best described in Panikkar's own words: "In the January 1919 issue of *The Modern Review*, I published a lengthy article entitled 'The Future of the Indian States'. It was written as an essay while I was at Oxford. At that time, I had no intention of writing a book on the topic, but six years later, when I was in Delhi editing *The Hindustan Times* I began in my leisure moments, to undertake a serious study of the subject, the results of which were embodied in a volume entitled *The Relations of the Government of India with the Indian States*. As in the earlier case of the *Problems of Greater India*, it was the publication of this book which changed the course of my life. A few days after the book came out, with an Introduction by Lord Oliver, a former Secretary

of State for India, I was accosted in front of Ritz Hotel, London, by an impressive looking personage, whom I did not know. He asked me if I was not so and so. On my replying in the affirmative, he said rather abruptly, "I am Col. Haksar. I have been trying to get into contact with you for the last few days. Would you come up to my room? I want to have a talk with you."

"I agreed to go up with him and in his suite in the Ritz Hotel, he told me that he had negotiated with the India Office the appointment of the Butler Committee to go into the relations of the States with the Government of India and how after having read my book, he was anxious that I should join with him in preparing the case of the Princes. That is how I embarked on my career in the service of Indian States which was to be my major field of work for over twenty (20) years, 1928-1948."

It was mentioned earlier that a challenge thrown by T.K. Krishna Menon kindled in Panikkar an urge to write something substantial about Kerala's past. His desire to look up all available evidences on various topics of the time when Europeans established contacts through trade with Kerala, prompted him to visit some of the important countries on the Continent. He began with Portugal. His chance meeting with an old friend, V.K. John, in London was the beginning of a fruitful association. John accompanied him in his European tour. They visited Lisbon, Port Belam and other places of historical significance and established contacts with scholar-statesmen like Vige Simiosh and others. Panikkar got introduced to these men through De Cruz from Goa, a reputed painter. They helped Panikkar in his search for valid and valuable documents needed for the reconstruction of events relating to European contacts with Asia in general and India and Kerala in particular. Throughout his stay in Lisbon, Panikkar spent the daytime in the National Library. He made a careful study

of almost all available materials relevant to Kerala History. His newly found friends like Andre and Furtado provided valuable help in this regard. The results of these efforts matured into books like *Malabar and the Portuguese* published later in 1929. In his Introduction to *Asia and Western Dominance*, published very much later, Panikkar mentioned how he came to write his books on Asian history. "There on the beach of Belam, from where Vasco Da Gama set out on his historic voyage, the idea came to me of writing a history of European relations with Asian countries during the long era inaugurated by that voyage. In 1949, I was in Nanking when the European warships evacuated their bases on the mainland of China and a few months afterwards, I travelled in the company of the diplomatic representatives of the European nations who left Shanghai after the People's Republic had been proclaimed in Peking. In the interval, I had also participated (from 1930) in the political discussions between India and Britain which led finally to the withdrawal of British authority from India. The idea which had lain dormant for twenty-five years and had so far found expression only in three limited studies, *Malabar and the Portuguese*, *Malabar and the Dutch*, *India and the Indian Ocean*, then seemed capable of realisation".

After a successful and fruitful tour of Portugal, Panikkar proceeded to the French Capital. He had heard and known much about Paris, but this was his first visit. He arrived in January 1926 and established contacts with the Indian students there. Most of them were alumni of Sorbonne University and had organised themselves into a Hindustan Samaj of which Prabodh Chandra Bagchi was the Secretary. Fortunately for Panikkar and his friend V.K. John, there was a special meeting of the Samaj scheduled to take place during that time. Panikkar's name was not unfamiliar to them. There were other invitees too, most of them meeting there for the

first time. There were a number of young men from other countries too, both East and West. Panikkar met here Germaine Marlange, Secretary of the French Society, Duong Van Gia, leader of Indo-Chinese Freedom Party, Mono Nuta of Java, Chin of Kuomintang Party of China, Jean Loyson, a young French poet, and others. The Secretary welcomed Panikkar and his friend and requested each to make a short speech, which they did with pleasure. When members came to know of Panikkar's association with the leaders of the Indian nationalist movement, especially of his contacts with Mahatma Gandhi, they wanted to know all about the freedom movement in India. Germaine Merlang volunteered to help Panikkar to get to know not only places of interest but also people who mattered most at that time. Her accessibility to important leaders and their society or associations proved very useful to him. This was especially true of her intimate contacts with some of the noted literary figures of the French capital. Panikkar did not hesitate to mention his desire to write for French papers and journals and sought her help to render into French his pieces for these publications. In fact, she volunteered to do so and their joint efforts continued on a mutually profitable basis till Panikkar left Europe for India. He thus got his writings published in many journals in French.

Panikkar had planned to stay in Paris only for about a fortnight. But he extended it to have a closer look at places, institutions and people. He was lodged at a place, 36 Ruedes Ecoles — almost in a central place of the University Institutions. It was not an expensive place and its advantages outweighed its drawbacks.

Paris of that period was, according to Panikkar, the haven of revolutionaries and exiles from all over the globe, especially from those countries where new or revolutionary



ideologies had taken roots. He found that a number of such brilliant "outcasts" were there in Paris. He was able to establish friendship with most of them through Germaine Marlange and Prabodh Chandra Bagchi. One was an Annamese lawyer Duong Van Gia who took a Doctorate in French law and was devoted to the cause of his country's freedom. He attended the Congress Session at Calcutta in 1928 at the invitation of Jawaharlal Nehru. He actively participated in the liberation struggle in his country and suffered imprisonment on many occasions. When his motherland achieved freedom, he became one of its important leaders. Unfortunately he was assassinated by his political apponents. Another friend was from Java — Mono Nutu by name. He belonged to the radical group of nationalists of Indonesia and was the Secretary of an organisation with Marxian ideology. He played an important role in the Indonesian freedom movement and became a Minister after independence from the Dutch. Mention may be made of a friend from Siam, Prion Mantri, the son of a diplomat of aristocratic heritage. During World War II his allegiance was with the Japanese and he became a Deputy Minister in the Government of Songram. Ali Bey from Azerbaijan and Chin from China were also there in this Asiatic group which organised an Oriental Society in Paris. Chin was the President, Panikkar Vice-President and Duong its Secretary. Membership was open to all from Asia and students formed the majority of members. The main objective of this Society was to correct distorted or biased news or comments that appeared in European newspapers and journals about the developments taking place in dependent or colonial countries. The practice was for the members to meet in a coffee-house every evening, to exchange information available from the East, to enable them to pass them on for appropriate use by the concerned parties. It was in one such meeting that Panikkar met Mohammed Hatta, who later became the leader

of the freedom struggle in Java and Foreign Minister, Prime Minister and later Vice-President of Indonesia.

A World Peace Meet was held in 1926 at Bierville in France, which, though not officially recognised, was representative in every other aspect. It was attended by about a thousand delegates. The Oriental Society was represented by its Secretary, Duong, and Panikkar deputised for the President. Panikkar has written that all European countries sent their delegations or observers, and an elder statesman of Italy, Signor Nitti, was also present. Francesco Saverio Nitti was Premier of Italy (1919-20) till he was exiled by Benito Mussolini, the dictator. It may be mentioned here that this liberal, elder statesman returned to Italy in 1945 to aid Italy's postwar recovery and reconstruction. He attended the World Peace Meet in 1926, when he was staying in France during his exile.

Panikkar has mentioned his association with Felix Vaiz, a Hungarian, who was living at that time in Paris. He was a linguist interested in Oriental Philosophy, especially of Buddhism. With him Panikkar collaborated to publish a trilingual quarterly, *Revue Des Nations*, which was a journal of ideas.

After a fruitful stay in Paris, Panikkar left for Berlin in December 1926. In Berlin he spent more than three months during which period he met most of the important Indians, like Virendra Chattopadhyaya, Raja Mahendra Pratap, Moulavi Barkatulla and A.C. Narayanan Nambiar. Nambiar was the correspondent of *The Hindu* in Berlin for many years and one of the earliest victims of Nazi terror in the first months of 1933. Nambiar had himself given detailed accounts of his experiences. After his release, he moved on to Prague from where he disappeared when the Nazis invaded that land. After

India attained independence Nambiar joined the Indian diplomatic service.

Panikkar went to Holland in April 1927. He had a desire to write on the Dutch, their contacts, conquests and influences left behind by them in the countries of the East. He was particularly interested in their activities on the west coast of India, especially in Malabar. The friendship he established with Mohammed Hatta in Paris, helped him in The Hague. Invitation to stay with him was graciously accepted by Panikkar. It will be worthwhile to mention some points about Hatta's activities, especially those immediately preceding Panikkar's visit. Mohammed Hatta was born on 12, August 1902 in an aristocratic family in the City of Pandang on the west coast of Sumatra island. While a student, he was active in the youth movement known as Sumatra Young Men's League, to begin with, as its Secretary and Treasurer, and later, as its President. He joined the Indonesian Association and dedicated himself to the establishment of a free nation in the Dutch East Indies. The journal of the Association was edited by him. He was also its chairman in 1925. He attended the International Democratic Congress held in Paris and also the Congress for Peace in Bierville in August 1926. He joined the League Against Imperialism while studying in Rotterdam and worked in its headquarters in Berlin from 1927-30. Because of his deep interest in economics, he took his Ph.D. in that subject from the Rotterdam University.

Panikkar stayed with Hatta in The Hague and was able to study some of the important, old records available in The Hague and Leiden Universities. Most of these records are referred to in his book, *Malabar and the Dutch* in two volumes, published later, in 1931. A number of friends assisted him especially in translating historical records for his use in the book.

By the time he completed his tour of the European mainland and returned to London, his book on Indian States was ready for release in May 1927. As already noticed, the book played a decisive role in his later career. Col. Haksar was instrumental in the offer of an influential and senior post in the service of the Kashmir Government. It will be pertinent to quote his own words on this unexpected development: "In every critical stage of my life, I have been guided by the affection, regard and advice of certain remarkable men who I came to regard as my *gurus*. I had no influential relations nor was my family powerful. I was always helped on by my friends. During my college days in England, my source of help and inspiration was Dr. T.B. Strong whom I still revere like a father. After my return to India, the man whose disinterested help and guidance shaped my life was Syed Ross Masood. At this new stage of life and for long afterwards, the man who was my *Guru* and whose affection, advice and assistance forwarded my career was Kailash Narayan Haksar."

As a result of the acceptance of the post in the Government of Kashmir, Panikkar had to disengage himself from some previous commitments and also to discontinue old associations in Europe.

The period between the offer and the actual receipt of the order of appointment was not spent in idleness. On 9 November 1927, it was officially announced by the Viceroy, Lord Irwin, that an all-British Statutory Commission was constituted to go into the question of constitutional reforms. It was headed by Sir John Simon and hence came to be known as the Simon Commission. Whatever be the controversies whipped up by that action, Panikkar thought it appropriate as well as topical to make an assessment of the earlier reforms introduced in India under the Montague-Chelmsford proposals published in July 1918. They mainly



envisaged a form of dyarchy in the provinces, a sort of partial provincial autonomy, with that principle was not applicable to the Government at the Centre. He began to write a book — *The Working of Dyarchy in India* — on 2 September, and completed it on 17 September 1927, within a period of two weeks. It was published by Taraporevala, Bombay, in 1928, under the pen-name, Kerala Putra.

Panikkar points out that the "Indian political ideal and Indian political practice are largely the reflexion of what has grown up in England". He was sure that British political tradition had become part of the heritage of India. For instance, there were complaints of deportation without preliminary judicial trial. But the idea that such a procedure is wrong is British, not Indian. Similarly, the right of certification, by which the authorities refuse to accept the rejection of a measure by a proto-parliament, is much criticised but the idea that the executive is bound by the decisions of the legislature, is purely British.

Panikkar has warned that until recently freedom "meant the freedom to follow the customs of caste, religion and sect.... but that conception of freedom has entirely vanished. People now clamour for social reform, that is, the interference of the State in the customs and institutions of the people. Their complaint is that the British Government does not lend its support to the efforts that are being made to re-order society."

He has asked for caution in the process of Indianisation. "It would be a disaster of the first magnitude, if the superior services which have been built up through the efforts of over a century and on which depend the peaceful evolution of self-government, should be made a prey to shifting political considerations and communal and personal interests... only so much of the functions of the civil services, as is compatible

with the authority of the councils, should be thus curtailed. For the rest, the purely administrative authority of the services should be maintained intact, and without interference either from the Ministers or from the Council". The first result of the British Indian reforms was a remarkable fall in the number of candidates for the I.C.S. and a large number of retirements!

Mention has to be made here of a historical novel Madhava Panikkar published in 1928. The locale is mostly his own native village, Kavalam, and its surrounding places. The rulers of petty principalities were indulging in never-ending rivalry and conflict: the situation was well exploited by the Dutch who nursed political ambitions.

## KASHMIR

ON receipt of the telegraphic appointment and the firm commitment from Col. Haksar, Panikkar left England for India to take up the work in Kashmir State. Jawaharlal Nehru, his wife Kamala, sister Krishna and daughter Indira were his co-passengers on the ship. Another acquaintance and friend, K.K. Pillai, provided them not only entertaining jokes but also delicious dishes, as he was a culinary expert! Panikkar landed at Colombo and from there went home via Tuticorin and Quilon. He stayed at home only for two days before he left Kavalam for Kashmir.

The man behind Panikkar's assignment was Col. Kailash Narain Haksar. This is how Panikkar describes him: "In appearance, he was handsome, dignified and the personification of Brahmin aristocracy. His profound natural intelligence had been reinforced by discipline. A cultivated mind, brilliant conversation, wide experience and extraordinary learning in Persian and English, were the qualities that set Haksar out among the great personalities of India."

Kashmir was invaded by Mahmud of Ghazni in 1015 and 1021, but could not be subjugated by him. By the early 14th century, Allauddin Khilji had established his supremacy not only in the north but to a substantial extent up to Rameshwaram in the South. But Kashmir remained free. However, it suffered at the hands of the Mongol adventurers. Rinchan, exiled from Ladakh, was able to exploit the political confusion and chaos created by the Mongols, and proclaimed himself ruler of Kashmir on 6 October, 1320. Though Rinchan, the Buddhist, wanted to become a Saivite Brahmin, by unforeseen circumstances ended up as a Muslim convert and took the name of Sultan Sadruddin. He thus became the first Muslim ruler of Kashmir and built the first mosque in

Srinagar— "Bud Masheed" — on the site previously occupied by a Buddhist shrine. But his successors were weak and visionless and lost power to Shamir, who ascended the throne in 1339 under the new name, Sultan Shamsuddin.

The re-establishment of Hindu rule begins with Gulab Singh, who attained eminence in the court of Ranjit Singh. For his active military service and political support, the Sikhs rewarded Gulab Singh in 1820, with the control of Jammu, the title of raja, and the right of perpetual possession of the territory. Not only did he consolidate his position as ruler but he also established sway over the surrounding Rajput principalities. In 1834, Ladakh came under his control. When Ranjit Singh died in 1839, Raja Gulab Singh was easily the most influential personage in the Sikh empire and also its chief feudatory. In the years that followed (1840-42), he conquered Baltistan and western Tibet and added to the geographical boundaries of India. No previous ruler, not even Samudra Gupta or Akbar, had dreamed of invading Tibet.

The situation after the advent of the British is best described by Josef Korbel in his book: "Seven years later, the British waged war against the rebellious Sikhs. It was at this time that Raja Gulab Singh engineered his great coup. Any sense of obligation he may have felt towards the Sikhs for establishing his rule over Jammu vanished before his realistic appraisal of the eventual outcome of the struggle. At first he remained strictly neutral, then he assumed the role of advisor and mediator for the British, and finally, according to some sources, he actually participated in fighting his one-time protectors. When, after the defeat, the Sikhs were ordered to relinquish their hold over Kashmir, Raja Gulab Singh played his ace. He offered the British 7.5 million rupees for the possession of Kashmir and the final result was the treaty of Amritsar, signed in 1846. Kashmir, by its terms, was to be



"for ever an independent possession to Gulab Singh and the heirs male of his body."

The intrigues, rivalries, political and other squabbles after the death of Gulab Singh in 1852, during the period of Ranbir Singh, Pratap Singh and the final assumption of authority by Raja Hari Singh, are beyond the scope and relevance of this book. Suffice it to say that, under the constitution of the Jammu and Kashmir State Council 1924, Raja Hari Singh was appointed Commander-in-Chief, and Senior Foreign Member of the Council. When the ruler died in 1925, Hari Singh's accession to the *gadi* was smooth, as all these years he was working with his eyes fixed on it!

Panikkar joined the Kashmir State Service on 2 January 1928, almost three years after Raja Hari Singh succeeded Raja Pratap Singh. By an amendment to the constitution of 1926 issued in March 1927, Maharaja Hari Singh assumed all powers of the Government and a Council of Ministers was constituted. The Council remained in office subject to the pleasure of His Highness the Maharaja Bahadur, and was responsible to him only. An Army Board was formed for military administration. Another important step was the Jammu and Kashmir Government notification No. 1, 20 March 1928, for the reconstitution of the High Court in the State.

There were three Ministers when Panikkar joined the service. Sir Albion Banerji, in charge of Foreign Affairs and Trade, G.E.C. Wakefield, in charge of Public Works, and Piyari Krishnan Vattal, Home and Judicial Affairs. "Banerji was a seasoned administrator, who had a good record as Dewan of Mysore and Cochin. In political matters he had uncommon grasp and extreme competence. Piyari Krishnan Vattal was an officer of the Indian Audit Service. Although he was able and well-versed in Secretarial work, he was apt to

be jealous and scheming. He could not tolerate anyone else approaching the Maharaja. Wakefield may be described as an illiterate European. He was proof of the theory that Europeans who serve Indian Princes usually display the defects of both races. He gained favour with the Maharaja as a manager of the royal lands."

Panikkar was to work as an assistant to Vattal. In an atmosphere charged with tensions generated by rivalry, palace intrigue and jealousy, he survived without injury! He was mainly entrusted with the responsibility of preparing material relating to the rights and privileges of the Maharaja under various agreements, treaties and other matters between the State and the Paramount Power.

Hari Singh was an active member of the Chamber of Princes. When the Government of India constituted a committee with Sir Harcourt Butler as Chairman to go into the various questions relating to the relations of the Indian States with the Government of India *vis-a-vis* British India, Hari Singh believed that their report might pave the way for regaining at least some of the powers lost by the rulers. When the Butler Committee was scheduled to arrive in Srinagar in April 1928, a sub-committee was appointed by the Maharaja with Banerji, Vattal, Wakefield and Panikkar as members to prepare a memorandum to be submitted to them. In the sessions with the Committee, Panikkar presented matters relating to and relevant to the special treaty commitments of the Paramount Power with the Kashmir Maharaja. It was an impressive and effective performance. As a result of the deep impression created, he was deputed to assist the special expert committee to collect facts for presenting the Indian States' case. He went to England to join the committee of which Col. Haksar was a member. On the advice of Haksar, Panikkar prepared a history of the growth and evolution of

Princely States, their relation with the Paramount Power including the problems and troubles in the implementation of the treaty obligations by both parties. This was later published under the title *The British Crown and the Indian States*. It was the result of collaboration with Mrs. Austin Robinson. According to Panikkar, his contribution was prepared within a period of fifteen days.

After listening to the arguments presented by the interested parties for more than one and a half months, the committee adjourned for preparing their report. It is now known that even before the Butler Committee was constituted, Lord Birkenhead, Secretary of State, made sure that Lord Irwin, the Viceroy, impressed upon its designated chairman, Sir Harcourt Butler that there could be no weakening of the paramountcy in any manner. Birkenhead in his communication said: "Even granted that it may be in the interest of Great Britain (as many people think) no less than of the States themselves, that they should be entrenched against an Indianised Government of India, responsible to an Indian Legislature, the dreaded day is remote, and we cannot afford in the meantime to entrench them against ourselves." In other words the Indian States Committee was effectively manipulated and influenced before it began to discharge its functions. On his way back from London, Panikkar received at Bombay the message about his father-in-law's critical illness. But he could reach home, Kavalam, only two days after his demise. After attending to the traditional obsequies, he returned to Srinagar.

Meanwhile, important developments had taken place in the power structure there; Vattal was able to establish his ascendancy owing to the ruler's increased confidence in him. The decline and fall of Banerji was an established fact and soon he left the scene for good.



The Butler Committee report was out in April 1929. As *The Hindu* commented, "What the Princes bargained for was complete internal sovereignty; but what they were granted under the report was unqualified slavery, dressed up though it was, in glittering robes of royalty."

After Banerji's exit, Panikkar was drafted for the post of Council Secretary whose duties were specified in the constitution of the State Council. He was to prepare a list of all cases received from members and draw up the agenda for the Council meetings. But before assumption of charge of the new post, he was summoned to another important work concerning the Princes in their Delhi office. In 1919, the Paramount Power made available to the Princes a forum in the Chamber of Princes to ventilate their grievances. Then in 1927 they agreed to hold an enquiry into the operation of paramountcy. As part of the preparation for the country's involvement in politics on a wider scale, an expert committee was constituted by the Chancellor of the Chamber of Princes, Maharaja of Patiala, with Col. Haksar as Director and Panikkar as Secretary. Far from being silent and impotent partners, these efforts converted the States into active and powerful principals of policy in India.

Panikkar was invited by the University of Calcutta to give Readership lectures in 1929, which he considered an honour and accepted. The subject of the lectures was different aspects of British policy towards Indian States up to 1857. This he dealt with under six heads and published it as a book, under the title *British Policy Towards Indian States*. His purpose was to trace the gradual evolution of British policy towards Indian States. The author expressed his sincere "thanks to the University of Calcutta for having invited him to deliver the lectures and to His Highness the Maharaja of Kashmir for having graciously granted permission to avail himself of the invitation."



Another book which Panikkar published was *Founding of the Kashmir State* with stress on the biographical details of Maharaja Gulab Singh. He has described the book as a short memoir, tracing the life story of the Maharaja, to fill up a gap in the history of India in the 19th Century.

## CHAMBER OF PRINCES OF PATIALA

**T**HE political situation in India at the time of assumption of power by the British crown after the 1857 revolution was unique. India was for centuries ruled by numerous feudal lords. Those local rulers came to be known as Princes and their domains as Princely States. The Crown exercised its authority through a principal Secretary of State for India, assisted by a council of fifteen members designated as Council of India. All treaties made by the East India Company were binding on the Crown, and all contracts, covenants, liabilities and engagements the Company made, incurred, or entered into earlier, could be enforced by and against the Secretary of State. On this basis, when Great Britain became the Paramount Power in India, these Princely States were legitimised. Even Akbar, the great Mughal Emperor, had attempted to bring the strongest of these feudatories under his central government, by sending provincial governors out from Delhi. Panikkar has said that the British reversed this plan when they discovered a method by which political power could be exercised through puppet monarchs. A conquering power, in almost all cases, assumes responsibility of administration of the subjugated land. In this case, the governance of the territory that came under its charge was left to the feudal ruler concerned and the ruler's protection was assumed by the conquering power!

The beginning of the idea of an organised forum for the rulers of Native States had its genesis as far back as 1905, when Imperial power and glory was almost at its zenith. Curzon suggested, in July that year, the establishment of a Council of Princes. This was, according to him, to improve the calibre of the rulers. The Council was to function in an

advisory capacity and its discussions would be strictly limited to matters connected with Imperial service scheme. Minto, who found the Princes likely allies as "counterpoise to Congress aims", suggested a council of Princes, or an elaboration of that idea — a privy council, not only of native rulers, but of a few other big men to meat, say once a year, for a week or fortnight.

The department that dealt with the affairs of the Native States in general, was denoted as Foreign Department, which in 1906 was renamed Foreign and Political Department. One Post of Senior Officer, a Political Secretary, was created in 1913 to deal with States matters only. The important details of policy relating to them were formulated and annual conferences of the rulers were regularly held from 1913. In the conference held in Delhi in November 1917, the Maharaja of Bikaner suggested the establishment of a constitutional Chamber which may safeguard the interests and rights of "ourselves and our States". Lord Chelmsford, the Viceroy, made it known that he was interested in an outline scheme of the political future of the States and requested the Princes to submit a proposal. This was produced by a committee of Princes consisting of Bikaner, Alwar, Patiala and Navanagar. They, in this report, suggested setting up of a chamber of ruling Princes and that all States be placed in direct relation with the Government of India. The report was received by Montague and Chelmsford at Delhi in February 1918 in a meeting attended by the rulers of Gwalior, Jaipur, Jodhpur, Kolhapur, Kutch, and Bhopal in addition to four members of the Committee. When the Montford Report was published on 22 April 1918, it recognised the anxiety of the Princes and assured that "no constitutional changes which may take place will impair their rights, dignities and privileges secured to them by the treaties, sanads and engagements or by established practice." The Report also

made two important recommendations, one relating to the codification of political practice and the other, the organisation of a Chamber of Princes. In the next annual conference on 20 January 1919, suggestions regarding the membership of the Chamber were spelt out by Chelmsford.

The Secretary of the political department, J.B. Wood, was a strong supporter of this idea. He felt that "If the growing demand for collective discussion is disregarded, we run the risk of alienating the sympathies of those, whose support is most worth having." Austin Chamberlain, Secretary of State, was cautious, if not hesitant, to take up the topic for serious implementation. But his successor Montague, after his meetings with persons concerned, published the scheme as part of the Constitutional Reforms mentioned earlier. In the conference of January 20, various sub-committees were appointed to examine the recommendations. The outcome of these deliberations was embodied in a series of resolutions for the creation of a permanent council of Princes, a standing committee, acceptance of the principle of commission of enquiry and the establishment of direct relations between government of India and the important States. The Princes' annual conference continued to meet every year, till the Chamber of Princes was formally inaugurated. The Maharaja of Bikaner acted as Honorary General Secretary of the conference till the end.

The recommendations of the Montford Report was the basis of the Royal Proclamation creating the Chamber of Princes. It was formally inaugurated in February 1921 by His Royal Highness, the Duke of Connaught, on behalf of His Imperial Majesty. The Viceroy was the President of the Chamber with a Chancellor and Pro-Chancellor elected from among the members annually. The important organ of the Chamber was its Standing Committee, which consisted of



seven members including the Chancellor and Pro-Chancellor. The functions of the Committee were to advise the Viceroy on questions referred to it by him and propose for his consideration other questions affecting Indian States generally or which were of concern either to States as a whole or to British India and the States in common.

The Maharaja of Bikaner became its first Chancellor and continued till 1926, when the Maharaja of Patiala assumed that responsibility through normal election. He held it for eight and a half years.

There were important people who foresaw "friction and jealousies bound to mar the harmony of the proceedings and cause the scheme to fail."

On 9 November 1927, it was officially made known by the Viceroy, Lord Irwin, that a statutory commission under the chairmanship of Sir John Simon would go into the introduction of Constitutional reforms in India. It was an all-British Commission which did not satisfy the leaders of public opinion. The Indian National Congress declared that it had nothing to do with it and would boycott it. But still, despite vehement protests and boycott, the Commission submitted its report in time. The Central Assembly rejected the Report on 14 July 1930, by a majority of twelve. When the announcement regarding the holding of the Round Table Conference was announced, it became necessary to formulate plans on the general attitude of the States. The Chancellor of the Chamber constituted an expert committee to advise the Princes on relevant issues. Col. Haksar was appointed Director, with Panikkar as his deputy, with his office in Delhi. Panikkar left Kashmir for Delhi and took up the new responsibility. He was to go into all matters that might affect the interests of the Princes and their States, when new provisions proposed were implemented. This was a serious and delicate task, as things

had to be completed before the Princes delegation left India for London to attend the Round Table Conference. The Princes decided to meet the Viceroy informally to discuss and appraise him of their points and problems. But before this was done, they felt it necessary to hold an exclusive session in which the rulers were to formulate their proposals and policy in general terms. This was arranged two days prior to the meeting with the Viceroy proposed to be held in Simla. An agenda was drawn up for discussion by Haksar and Panikkar. Along with other relevant topics, it was suggested therein that the future Indian Constitutional structure might be on federal principle in which the Provinces and States would be units. When this matter came up for discussion, strong opposition became evident to the federal principle from among the members who were present. As such, it was dropped. This was a great disappointment to both Haksar and Panikkar, as both of them were the protagonists of the federal idea for the future set-up of India.

As mentioned earlier, on the basis of the desire expressed by the Simon Commission, the British Government initiated steps to hold the Round Table Conference in London on 12 November 1930, consisting of representatives of various Indian interests. There were sixteen delegates from the States. The rulers of Alwar, Baroda, Bhopal, Bikaner, Kashmir and Patiala were present. The Maharaja of Patiala, Bhupendra Singh, it may be mentioned, was the Chancellor of the Chamber of Princes at that time. Panikkar was appointed the Secretary of the Princes' delegation and he left India for England in September 1930.

It may not be out of place to mention how the influential Muslim intellectuals reacted to the political discussions that were going on during this time. Sir Muhammad Iqbal, (1877-1938) saw a menace to Islam in India in the scheme of

federation which was discussed at the Round Table Conference. He remarked: "The truth of the matter is that participation of Indian Princes, among whom only a few are Muslims, in a federation scheme serves a double purpose. On the one hand, it serves as an all-important factor in maintaining the British power in India practically as it is. On the other hand, it gives an overwhelming majority to Hindus in an all-India federal assembly. In other words, the scheme appears to be aiming at a kind of understanding between Hindu India and British imperialism— You perpetuate me in India and I in turn give you a Hindu oligarchy to keep all other Indian communities in perpetual subjection. If Muslims silently agree to any such scheme, it will simply hasten their end as a political entity in India."

Though the Maharaja of Bikaner, Ganga Singh, and the Maharaja of Patiala, Bhupendra Singh, had worked together in the Chamber, an undercurrent of tension continued to exist between the two. It came to the surface during the Round Table Conference. When Patiala began to attend the meetings of the Indian States delegation, he started to plague Wedgewood Ben, the Secretary of State for India, with complaints that as Chancellor of the Chamber of Princes, he was not receiving due recognition. The role as leader was being usurped by Maharaja Ganga Singh of Bikaner. Panikkar was appointed Secretary of the Chamber in February 1931. There was some opposition to his nomination as some rulers had reservations about his qualification for the post. Influential Princes like Jamsaheb of Navanagar were against him. Though Bhupendra Singh had not known Panikkar intimately, he supported the candidature of Panikkar, and it was this ruler's influence that ultimately put him in the saddle.

The friction between Patiala and Bikaner came to a head in March 1931 when Bikaner's support for the Nawab of Bhopal enabled the latter to defeat Patiala in the election to

Chancellorship. But the manoeuvrings of Patiala gave little rest to the winners. The smaller Princes began to feel strongly that Bikaner and Bhopal were committing them to accepting political arrangements over their heads. The pressure of adverse sentiments against these two rulers were such that they were forced to come to terms with the dissidents.

Panikkar had to shift his establishment to Bhopal after the new election for easier functioning. The animosity generated by the election did not disappear easily. It encouraged the overt and covert actions of Patiala to undermine the policy line of his opponents. This became evident during the period immediately before the Second Round Table Conference.

A new coalition with more powerful conservative elements came to power in Britain. Sir Samuel Hoare became Secretary of State and Lord Willingdon Viceroy in India. When the Indian States delegation met at Bombay in June 1931 to plan their strategy for the Second Round Table Conference, Patiala lobbied feverishly for a confederation. But Bhupender Singh was not able to mobilise a substantial number of supporters. Viceroy Willingdon was unhappy with him and did not include any supporters of the confederation in the Federal Structure Committee. Bhupendra himself could not attend the Round Table Conference due to financial problems and deputed his Prime Minister, Nawab Liaquat Hayat Khan.

The Second Round Table Conference lacked the enthusiasm which marked the first. As for the rulers, the communal disharmony in British India gave them quite sufficient excuse to sit back and watch the developments.

Panikkar tried to bring the warring groups together and close their ranks. When he met the Prime Minister of Patiala, Liaquat Hayat Khan, in London during the Round Table



Conference, they discussed this topic and also ways and means for strengthening the Chamber of Princes. On return to India after the Round Table session, a combined meeting of the Rulers along with Chief Ministers of both groups, was held to sort out misunderstandings. A committee was set up to suggest steps in this regard. It consisted of Akbar Hydari, Col. Haksar, Manubai Mehta, Liaquat Hayat Khan, Yuvaraja of Libidi, C.P. Ramaswami Iyer and K.M. Panikkar. Ramaswamy Iyer was the Chairman of the committee. The Draft to the agreement, which is known as the "Delhi Pact" (1932), was prepared by Ramaswamy Iyer and Panikkar.

According to this plan, a ruler who was not allied to any of the two groups should be elected as Chancellor, so that Chamber's functioning will be unaffected by rivalries of rulers. The result of this arrangement was to leave the way open to Jamsaheb of Navanagar, by now the most dedicated opponent of federation, to assume the office of the Chancellorship for the period March 1932 — March 1933.

Jamsaheb of Navanagar, Maharaja Ranjit Singhji, was one of the earliest to adopt the gospel of mission *Civili satrice* that produced the most famous specimen of the brown Englishman. Sent to England in 1887 to complete his schooling, he stayed on to play cricket for Surrey and England and did not see Navanagar again until 1904, shortly before his accession to the *gadi*. It was said that the Chamber was virtually annexed by Patiala and Bikaner during the twenties and that it was run by a clique and not by representatives of the princely order. Navanagar was, from 1922, identified with the Bikaner faction. This Kathiawar State pursued a strong policy of suppression of nationalist activities. His principal advisor was Rashbrook Williams who was allergic to the nationalist aspirations of the people. Williams was not appreciative of the role played by Panikkar and tried to create

adverse feelings about him in influential circles. He used to give the impression that Panikkar was trying to wean the Princes away from the Paramount Power. Williams wanted to ease out Panikkar and see that Jamsaheb toed the line of the British interests. Persons like Col. Haksar had left Delhi for Gwalior and Panikkar was alone to meet these threats. Shortly after his election as Chancellor of the Chamber, Jamsaheb with Rashbrooke Williams left for England for a long holiday. With an adviser like Williams to aid and abet him, he set out to impede the progress of nationalists. His activities in England created resentment, even among the Princes and the Working Committee passed some resolutions against the doings of its Chancellor! Panikkar was even deputed to London to take steps to prevent unauthorised actions of the Jamsaheb in England!

The Third Round Table Conference was scheduled to take place in October 1932. Already the idea of federation was fast losing ground. Change in the constitution of the State's delegation only aggravated the fast-deteriorating situation. The financial problems faced by Bhupendra Singh were such that he was not permitted by the Political Department to attend it. The Standing Committee of the Chamber also took a decision not to take an active part in the deliberations. Those Princes already in London or otherwise planning to go there, were allowed to attend.

The quarrel between Jamsaheb and Panikkar reached its peak during the period when both were in London for the Third Round Table Conference. The Jamsaheb believed that Panikkar was behind the Working Committee's actions to thwart his initiative as the Chancellor. Panikkar had circulated some notes among the delegates rejecting certain views of the Jamsaheb.

On return to India after the conference, the Jamsaheb carried his fight to Delhi and did his best to create feelings against Panikkar in the centres of power. The Viceroy, Lord Willingdon, was on excellent terms with Jamsaheb. Willingdon, while in Madras as Governor, had a clash with Panikkar, after which it became easy for anyone to revive in the Viceroy his hatred of Panikkar. So the activities of the Jamsaheb gained momentum day by day. Another opportunity came in March 1933, when the elections to the Chamber were planned. The Chancellor wrote confidentially to the members about Panikkar and pointed out to them the reasons why he wanted Panikkar to be relieved of his post. The Chancellor utilised another opportunity during the budget discussion. No provision was made in it to pay for Panikkar's services as Secretary, which virtually amounted to removing him from the post. But in the election of the Chancellor, Bhupendra Singh won with a big majority. He wanted Panikkar to continue as Secretary and on 29 March 1933 his continuance in the old post was formally announced!

In the Third Round Table Conference that began on 18 November 1932, none of the important rulers were present and their interest in federation was almost non-existent. The Conference came to a close by December end and a White Paper was issued in March 1933, incorporating the decisions. It provided Provincial autonomy and the constitution of a federation if a specified number of Princely States acceded. V.S. Srinivasa Sastri's comment on the White Paper reflected the reaction of the Indian public in general — "What might have been the one clear gain of the third R.T.C is thrown into jeopardy by the White Paper. In the spirit of hope which refuses to be killed, we looked for the glad news that the required half of the Indian States had promised to come into the new order of things and that Federation would be born

soon after provincial autonomy. In vain does the *chataka* stretch his supplicatory throat before a dry cloud”.

The Narendra Mandal (Chamber of Princes) met in the Council House of the Princes' Chamber on Monday, 20 March 1933. Lord Willingdon, the Viceroy, presided. The Jamsaheb of Navanagar and the Chancellor, Sir Ranjit Sinhji Vidhaji made a statement regarding the part played by the Indian States Delegation to the Third Round Table Conference. It was a lengthy one and after about twenty minutes, the Viceroy, Lord Willingdon, interrupted exercising his power as Chairman, called the Jamsaheb to order, with the remarks — “I do not wish to criticise, I do not wish to stop, His Highness if he wishes to continue his remarks, but they are purely personal observations and in no sense a report of the Third Round Table Conference”. Ranji rose and left the Chamber a broken man. Feeling himself rebuked by the power he sought to save. From the moment he left the Chamber, he lost all desire to live. Friends who saw him later were horrorstruck at the change that had taken place in his appearance in a few hours. He left Delhi for Jamnagar on March 29 and passed away about 5 O'clock on the morning of April 2. In 1934, Maharaja Bhupendra Singh launched the Ranji Trophy, which is the only memorial to this Prince of cricketers “who never attempted to fuse the English cricketer and the Indian Prince”.

Panikkar was offered Foreign Ministership in Patiala concurrently with Secretaryship of the Chamber and he joined the service on 4 April 1933. The Maharaja's first instruction to Panikkar was to proceed to England to help present the Princes' case correctly on the proposed Bill before the Joint Parliamentary Committee. It was appointed to consider the future Government of India with special reference to the White Paper proposals. The Chairman was Lord Linlithgow.

The Standing Committee of the Chamber appointed a



special committee with C.P. Ramaswamy Iyer as Chairman and Akbar Hydari, Prabhaskar Pattani, Manubhai Mehta, Kailash Narain Haksar, Yuvaraja of Limbidi and K.M. Panikkar as members. This committee submitted a report recommending the acceptance of the federal scheme subject to certain conditions. The conditions enumerated for their acceptance to join the federation were eighteen in number. The Chamber sent a delegation consisting of Manubhai Mehta and Nawab Liaquat Hayat Khan to represent matters before the Joint Select Committee. Mahboob Mahmood and Panikkar were sent to advise them.

Before Panikkar returned to India, his programme was to visit Germany, which was passing through a period of far-reaching changes. Hitler had consolidated his power and the Nazi party was in total control. Panikkar had with him letters of introduction to a number of important people in positions of power in the Government. He met Franz von Papen, who was then Vice-Chancellor under Hitler.

Even while he was in Europe, Panikkar had received a message from the Maharaja of Bikaner asking him to meet him on return to India. So, when he reached Bombay, he met his well-wisher Col. Haksar, and sought his guidance on the proposal made by Ganga Singh. Panikkar respectfully conveyed it to the Maharaja that as soon as his commitment with Patiala was over, he would be free to go to Bikaner.

The Report of the J.S.C. was published early in 1934. It was generally accepted that the Committee took the Simon Report as their Bible from which they differed in regard to but a few points. The proposals were more reactionary than the White Paper. The newly elected Central Assembly expressed their view on 8 February 1935 that the Report was "bad and totally unacceptable". This was done in M.A. Jinnah's amendment to the Government motion! The proposed

federation, according to Rajendra Prasad, the then Congress President, was one which has no parallel in history. In it the rulers of one-third of India will be called in to counteract through their nominees, the progressive elected elements of the remaining two-thirds."

The Chamber constituted a committee with Akbar Hydari, Kailash Narain Haksar, V.T. Krishnamachari, Mirza Ismail, Manubhai Mehta, C.P. Ramaswamy Iyer, Liaquat Hayat Khan, S.M. Bappanna, K.M. Panikkar, Prabhakar Pattani, K.A.H. Abbassi, E.J.D. Colin, K.C. Neogy and D.K. Sen. It was representative of all interests of Princely States and Panikkar contributed substantially in the preparation of its report.

The Chancellor arranged for a meeting of the Chamber in January 1935 to enable member Princes to express their frank views. The day after the session, the draft Government of India Bill was published and the Princes were given time up to the end of February to submit their firm views. A meeting of the Princes and ministers was held on 25 February 1935 at Bombay, which was attended by 26 rulers and over sixty Ministers. The speeches delivered even by the friends of the federation were of a kind that never had been heard before in any conference of Princes. The meeting showed that although some of them may have paid lip service to the federation, the Princes generally had not yet accepted its fundamental principle of limitation of powers of the federating units, involving a permanent resignation of part of their internal sovereignty to the federation in return for a share in its Government. The important views expressed at the conference, though highly confidential in nature, leaked out in the press. Winston Churchill and other die-hard members in the Opposition in England, got an opportunity for mounting a frontal attack on the Bill. Churchill characterised it as a

“gigantic quilt of jumbled crochet work, a monstrous monument of shame built by pygmies”. The Chancellor deputed Sir Liaquat Hayat Khan, Sir Manubhai Mehta, K.M. Panikkar and Dhiran Sen to England to properly brief and instruct their counsel in negotiations regarding proposed changes in the Bill for acceptance by the Parliament. Through these efforts, the Princes were able to secure the substance of every amendment which was suggested by the Bombay conference.

Maharaja Bhupendra Singh was invited to attend the Silver Jubilee of the reign of George V in London. He accepted the invitation and elaborate arrangements were also planned for a tour of the Maharaja in Eastern Europe. Panikkar was deputed to London in connection with work concerning the 1935 India Bill which was at that time under discussion in Parliament. Hence, he sailed from Bombay about a week earlier. Panikkar disembarked at Naples and proceeded to Rome waiting for the Maharaja and his party. They met Victor Emmanuel and Benitto Mussolini, who was at the zenith of his power. Panikkar was given separate audience with them. He also visited the Pope at the Vatican. From Italy, he went to England, as mentioned before, where his responsibility was to brief the Secretary of State on amendments, etc. The Maharaja visited some other places in Italy before going to London. Panikkar and Dhiran Sen, along with Wilfred Green, legal advisor, took the responsibility for a clause-by-clause indepth examination of the provisions of the Bill relating to the matters concerning the Indian States and their rulers. This was with a view to proposing appropriate changes for consideration of the Secretary of State for acceptance and later for introduction of an amendment to the Bill. Owing to their untiring efforts for a period of three months, they were able to persuade the authorities to recast, either wholly or in part, about forty clauses of the Bill. As indicated earlier, the Bill

introduced in British Parliament, on 12 December 1934, was discussed in detail and passed in June 1935. The Royal assent was affixed on it on August 2, 1935, when it became Government of India Act, 1935.

In February 1937, the Princes discussed the federation proposal, particularly in the light of the report of Morgan, a British jurist, selected by the Princes to advise them. His advice was against their joining the federation. Meanwhile, elections were held under the new Act in 1937 and the Congress got a majority in six out of eleven provinces. The issue of office acceptance came to the fore and sober public opinion was for the Congress to accept office. "The disciplined Congress majority in the Legislatures, backed by the support of the masses could do more within an year or two, to make England see reason than the Congress in the wilderness of eternal opposition might be able to do for decades", said *The Hindu*. Jawaharlal Nehru, the Congress President, was strongly against it. The Congress Working Committee which met in New Delhi on 7 July 1937, decided to accept office in the provinces where the Congress commanded a majority. Following the declarations of the Viceroy, Lord Linlithgow, and Secretary of State, Lord Zetland, on 14 July 1937 the first Congress Ministry in Madras was announced. It may not be out of place to mention that the formal inauguration of provincial autonomy was made on 1 April 1937 with the King's message.

None of the Princes took any initiative to accede to the federation. While the Reserve Bank and the Federal Court, two important conditions of the federal plan, were established, the requisite number of States had not given their consent to join the federation. So, while the provincial part of the Act was enforced on 1 April 1937, the federal scheme was not put



into operation. The British authorities were not positive in their approach.

In April 1939, the Committee appointed by the Chamber of Princes with Sir Akbar Hydari, the Prime Minister of Hyderabad as Chairman, submitted its report on a standard Instrument of Accession for the States. It was the view of the Committee that in the absence of adequate protection for non-federal treaty rights, accession was not possible. This stand was endorsed by the Chamber by a resolution in the meeting held in June 1939 at Bombay.

As an author has stated, the Viceroy, Marquis of Linlithgow, had a personal commitment in the success of the Act of 1935, as he had been the Chairman of the Joint Select Committee on the Bill. When he succeeded the Marquis of Willingdon in 1936 as Viceroy of India, he was keen on launching the Federation before his term came to an end in 1941. At this point of time, judging by the course of events that shaped the subsequent period, one would agree that the Viceroy's failure in this effort set the tone for the political and constitutional troubles that culminated in the erosion of Indian unity and the eventual ousting of the Princes from all independent power in the governance of India.

During and after the World War II, the entire scenario changed. The Indian political atmosphere was charged with tensions due to unexpected pressures and pulls. The Muslim League and its new posture became a major factor in this new environment. It is a frustrating but true fact that this major Muslim political party began to muster strength only after it had declared itself as a party working for and aspiring to achieve, a separate state for the Muslims in the Indian sub-continent. As a matter of historical record, when one looks back over the last few years of the British Raj, it is surprising

how late in the story it was that the idea of partition emerged as a pressing and practical political solution. The fact that it was never seriously put forward in the Round Table Conference debates or indeed in any of the discussions between 1930-1940, suggests that federation, if only it could have been quickly implemented, might have saved the situation. Jinnah, in his Presidential Address at the Lucknow Session of the Muslim League in October 1937, called for complete united front and honesty of purpose for demanding a full national democratic government for India. The feat of Balkanisation at that time was only from the Indian Native States, who may muster necessary strength by various dubious means and create division and disunity. When the federal set-up was under serious discussion, the spectre of Pakistan was not a lively issue. It gathered form and strength with the events that followed after the World War II, as a result of opportunities missed by the leaders of major Indian political parties. Henceforth it was Pakistan and not the Indian Native States that became a major stumbling factor in the political progress of India as a single nation.

Panikkar had seen the importance of the crucial issue regarding the central authority and foreseen the fate of the country as far back as July 1941. In a letter to Dr. Syed Mahmud, he wrote: "I have, for a long time now, been a Pakistanist. Without separation of Pakistan, a central government will not be possible in India. The fear of a Hindu majority at the centre, whatever safeguards you may create and whatever pacts you may work out, will drive the Muslims to unreasonable madness. I have no terrors about even exchange of populations. But the "two eyes" theory now called the "two nations" theory, and the central government, cannot work together. So let us, my dear Mahmud, forswear our past. Consider ourselves failures for having dreamed of a United India."

An objective assessment of the situation now will reveal that the Princes not realising the always narrowing range of political options open to them, failed to maximise the limited advantages the civil disobedience movement or the Round Table Conference offered them. Their long-standing rivalries based on regional affiliations and personal ambitions, disrupted unified reaction, when they would have been most useful. The Viceroy announced on 11 September 1939 the suspension of negotiations concerned with the federation for the duration of the war, which was obviously, the "death knell of federation under the 1935 Act."

Panikkar views on the federal plan were not in consonance with those of the Maharaja, but they faced little problem for adjustment. He represented the Maharaja when the federal plan was discussed. This was resented by the Maharaja's friends, like rulers of Dholpur, Panna and others. They even brought pressure on the Maharaja to dispense with the services of Panikkar. The row with Viceroy Willingdon, the enmity of Harold Wilberforce Bill, British Resident, etc., came to a head during the absence of Prime Minister Liaquat Hayat Khan. The Viceroy suspected the Maharaja had some hand in the adverse articles against him published in *Morning Post*, London, *Hindustan Times*, Delhi, *National Call*, Delhi, cartoons of Shankar in English newspapers, etc. Sir Frederick Gauntlet, a former Finance Minister of Patiala, also created some opposition to the Maharaja because of his influence with the Political Department and the Viceroy. These were some of the disturbing matters that required special attention. The Maharaja consulted some resourceful persons of British India on these for solution. The efforts of interested groups to destabilise the king's authority demanded delicate handling.

After a series of consultations, the Maharaja decided to depute Panikkar as emissary to England to present the actual

facts. He was to try to create favourable feeling in important official centres towards Patiala State in general and the Maharaja in particular. The adverse feeling created by interested groups was so strong that the threat of deposition was in the air. The only way to save the situation was to work in a silent but effective way to influence people in key positions. Panikkar was able to carry out this mission with skill. He got valuable assistance from persons like Sammuel Hoare, Lord Halifax, Michael O'Dwyer and others. The Secretary of State was impressed with Panikkar's briefing. It was ensured that no adverse action against the Maharaja will be initiated in England.

Panikkar left England after completing the assignment and greatly relieved with a feeling of success in a complicated case. The harassment by the British Resident and the tendentious action by the political department were considerably reduced. The Maharaja was able to slowly regain the confidence of his fellow-rulers and smaller groups. The clear indication of this rehabilitation was Patiala's election to chair the special Committee of Princes to draw up policy on the attitude to the federal proposals. The architect of these proposals was none other than Panikkar.

Bhupendra Singh was able to establish a better rapport with the new Viceroy, Lord Linlithgow, who succeeded Willingdon. But the ruler's health was rapidly declining. When the invitation to the coronation in England was received, he was so unwell that Panikkar was deputed to represent him.

The news of the deteriorating condition of Bhupender Singh was received by Panikkar when he was in Europe. He hurried back to India. About three days before the demise the Maharaja had expressed a desire to see Panikkar. Panikkar



has described the episode: "When I entered, he was leaning back on a *divan* surrounded by his wives. Although he was not wearing all his usual apparel, even at that time, his dress was princely. He wore a chain of pearls like a sacred thread and his ear-rings and royal bangles. A wand given to him by a Sanyasin from Travancore lay close at hand. Although weak, he talked to me for a short while on many matters". He passed away on 23 March 1938, at about 7 P.M. His death deeply touched Panikkar as a personal loss.

After this, Panikkar served in Patiala State for about an year more. He left Patiala on 23 March 1939 for Bikaner at the age of forty-five.

Panikkar visited Kavalam, his birth place in July 1939 in connection with the death anniversary of his uncle. The political situation in Travancore at that time was somewhat confusing. Though the term of Dewan C.P. Ramaswamy Aiyer was extended for another five years in 1935, there were some speculations floating in the atmosphere of some change in Dewanship. As early as 1929, there were strong rumours that Panikkar may be appointed Dewan. But nothing happened. This time, after attending the death anniversary of his uncle, he visited Thiruvananthapuram, "without any special purpose". Speculation was that he was making an all-out effort to be appointed as Dewan. The Maharaja's mother, it is said, was against him and Ramaswamy Aiyer moved his stakes well for continuing in the post, which was what ultimately happened. Thus ended Panikkar's secret, long-nurtured hope. The mutual dislike and jealousy between Aiyer and Panikkar increased in intensity after this episode. It may be mentioned that the uneasy relationship between the two had a long history dating back to 1930 when they used to meet at the Chamber of Princes.

Panikkar published an essay on the idea of the federal

structure for the future set-up of the Government of India in January 1919. Perhaps this was the first time that such a suggestion was made in a journal of influence and reputation. The matter again came up in a significant way when the agenda for the meeting of the rulers of Indian States was drawn up by Haksar and Panikkar. In this informal meeting of the Princes, the federal principle was unanimously disapproved. Panikkar was greatly disappointed and dejected, as his pet idea met with such a fate. He did not leave it at that, but decided to write in detail about the theme. This was how *Federal India* was written. He got the approval of Haksar to publish it under their joint authorship. It came out in November 1930, on the date of inauguration of the First Round Table Conference. According to Panikkar, it almost created a commotion, as it angered certain Princes and their advisers.

While Panikkar was in Kashmir, in December 1929, he was invited by the Calcutta University to give a course of six lectures on Indian History. A similar offer was extended by the University of Madras for a series under the Sundaram Aiyer and Krishnaswami Aiyer Foundation in 1933-34, regarding legal aspects of the relations of the British Crown and the Indian States. In these talks, an attempt was made to bring to the notice of the public the more detailed facts of this relationship. These six lectures were compiled and published by the University of Madras (1934) under the title *Inter Statal Law*. The internal security, no less than the external security which the ruling Princes enjoyed, was due ultimately to the protecting power of the British Government. The Government of India's policy, to begin with, was one of enforcing the isolation of these States as individual units. They were not permitted to have direct negotiations. But later events persuaded the Paramount Power to slowly but cautiously

change the attitude, and invite the co-operation of the Princes. The first meeting in this line was held on 30 October 1916, and the final recognition of this co-operation became evident when the Maharaja of Bikaner represented them on the Imperial War Cabinet in 1917. The collective organisation of the princes became a recognised entity with the establishment of the Chamber of Princes by the Royal proclamation of 8 February 1921. The strength and weakness of this association during the twelve years (preceding the lecture) of its existence are examined in depth. They reveal the author's penetrating inquiry of the environment of those times. It must be mentioned here that Panikkar was at that time Foreign Minister of Patiala and the Secretary of the Chamber of Princes.

A book on the activities of the Chamber of Princes was published by Panikkar under the title *Indian Princes in Council* in 1936. It highlighted the work of the Chamber in general and the ideas and schemes of Maharaja of Patiala during his Chancellorship, in particular. He was far too close to the events, and the people directly involved were his masters or friends, for objectivity and impartial assessments to be possible. When, for example, Panikkar says that the period when Patiala was Chancellor, "will stand out in modern Indian history as a period of great achievement," it can only be construed as the voice of a sycophant or hero worshipper rather than that of a historian.

Another book written and published by Panikkar during this period is a biography, *His Highness the Maharaja of Bikaner* (1937). It had an Introduction by Hardinge of Penherst. According to the author, Maharaja Ganga Singh's achievements both in his State and in the wider fields of India and Imperial politics, constituted an important chapter of modern Indian history. It may be borne in mind that the book

was published at a time when Panikkar had decided to leave Patiala for Bikaner to take up employment under Ganga Singh. The arrangements were on to celebrate the 50th anniversary of Maharaja Ganga Singh's reign.

*The Origin and Evolution of Kingship in India* (1938) was a series of lectures Panikkar delivered at Baroda. The material was prepared by him while he was at Patiala. The concept of the divine right of Kings, so well known in Europe, is foreign to Indian thinking and Indian political theorists have not recognised it. According to the author, the importation of the theory of State omnipotence has given to the idea of Indian monarchy, a conception of autocracy totally opposed to Indian idea. Bhupendra Singh, Maharaja of Patiala, believed that the position of Kingship was every bit as constitutional as that of the monarchies of the West. The duties and responsibilities are ascribed to certain traditional systems fixed according to the dictates of religion and morality. These are not set down in any document or code and as such were interpreted and decided upon for action according to the needs of the ruler, who invariably was ready to enforce his will on those charged with interpretation and elucidation of customs and traditions. The result was unrestricted lavishness on one side and extreme poverty on the other.

Politics and problems of State did not detract Panikkar's interest and commitment from his mother tongue. The first evidence of this was a product of the holiday-time he spent at a health resort, about a month before he took up the responsibilities at Patiala. He composed a long poem *Balika Matham*, composed on the pattern of the French work *Chanson de Billitis* by Pierre Louis. It was not a translation, but an independent poetical rendering of the phantasmagoria of moods, which influences the love-life of a lonely girl.



Published in 1934, it is in the form of a "dialogue in which a love-stricken lady describes her adventures in the land of love in the company of her lover. The rainbow colours of *Srinagara*, painted with remarkable artistry, make the poem very appealing".

Another work of the early period of his stay in Patiala is a discourse on the nature of poetry, *Kavita Tatwa Niroopanam* (1934). Divided into seven chapters, it discusses in detail the rudiments behind poetry in Malayalam and the European languages. Instead of discussing these topics based on works on poetics, he has dealt with them on the basis of his experiences and exchange of views with eminent authors in the West.

Panikkar has composed a book in the true pattern of *Sandesh Kavya* in Sanskrit. He selected a scion of the Royal family as his messenger under the title *Bhoopa Sandesam* (1934). The messenger starts from Patiala and reaches Thiruvananthapuram halting at important places en route. They are described in vivid detail. From Thiruvananthapuram he proceeds to Alleppey and thence to the home of the heroine. The description of the intervening stations is full of historical details in respect of which Panikkar, according to Chelangat Achutha Menon in his Foreword, is a perfect master.

Mention has been made of the cold war between Maharaja Bhupendra Singh and the British Resident. Even when it was at its worst, Panikkar found moments of peace in Patiala by devoting himself to composing a poem under the title, *Chinta Tharangini* (1935). It was published with an appreciative *Introduction* by Appan Thampuran, a recognised scholar prince of Cochin. Tossed on the waves of false dignity and caught in the currents of ambition, the poet finds that the

lamp of high ideals which illuminated his heart in youthful days, has grown dim as the oil of faith has drained. The only course that brings peace and happiness is to follow unhesitatingly the code that is tried and chosen individually that which is true to one's self. There is more of a thinker than a poet in this poem. In this book we can hear echos of the predicaments in which he was placed.

It should be pointed out that didactic poetry was not unknown in Malayalam. One early example is *Chinta Ratnam* attributed to Ezhuthachan. Panikkar's work is another one in that living stream of wisdom literature.

*Kalyana Mal*, a novel with the background of the Mughal period, began to be written at the time Panikkar was engaged in the discussions and negotiations on constitutional reforms. The Princes were all concerned with the provisions that were proposed by various interested parties. But he devoted one hour each morning as a part of relaxation of mental tension, during this period of conflict of interests and high-level discussions. He has stated that the period of the story was decided upon at the instance of his daughter, Parvathi. The novelist was able to deftly weave together the love story of a young Rajput couple and the rivalry of a Mughal princess of imperial blood, with the unifying trends which Akbar initiated to encourage the Hindu nobles to participate fully in the civil and military administration.

Panikkar wrote his serious play, *Bhishmar*, at the time the Maharaja Bhupender Singh was lying seriously ill. Almost all senior officials and Ministers were in attendance keeping a constant vigil. He found a good deal of relief from these haunting tensions by composing this play. The drama itself was completed, as indicated by Panikkar, a day before the royal demise. His intention was to revive the traditional

Sanskrit drama, which, according to him, is an excellent medium for communication of sentiments.

Mention may be made here of another play in Malayalam, *Mandodari*, written on the pattern of Sanskrit dramas. It was published in 1938. This shows a greater deftness and maturity in the art of presenting characters from classics, to convey sentiments that are valid today. The author has written a valuable *Introduction* explaining the relevance of traditional Sanskrit plays in the present-day context when Western concepts are accepted without much thought.

## BIKANER

ON the passing away of Bhupendra Singh, his son, Yadavender Singh, succeeded to the *gadi* of Patiala. He belonged to the new generation of rulers who had observed the writing on the wall and the demands of the times. One of the first acts of the Maharaja was to close the harem of his father. Panikkar continued to serve Patiala till he received the offer from the Maharaja of Bikaner on 23 March 1939, exactly one year after Bhupendra Singh's death. He left Patiala on 8 April and assumed charge of the new post the very next day. For the rest of his service, till Bikaner was integrated into the Rajasthan Union in April 1949, Panikkar was in that State.

The relationship of the House of Bikaner with the British as the central power in India, starts with the signing of the treaty of 1818 A.D. During the subsequent periods, the provisions of the treaty began to be interpreted to suit the interests of the British power. When Maharaja Dungar Singh, the 20th ruler, passed away without a heir on 19 August 1887, his adopted younger brother, Ganga Singh, became his successor. He was formally installed according to the customs of the State on 31 August 1887, at the age of seven. A regency council was set up with Col. Thorton, the Resident Political Agent as Chairman, Amir Mohamed Khan, the Diwan as Vice-Chairman, and five others as members. Ganga Singh attained majority in 1898 but was allowed to exercise full powers only in 1908.

Ganga Singh's role in the creation of the Chamber of Princes was substantial. When it was constituted under a Royal proclamation and inaugurated, he was elected as its first Chancellor in 1921. He served in that capacity till 1926. In the First Round Table Conference, he made "a substantial contribution in opening up the way to a really united



federated India". But he did not show the same interest in the Second and Third Conferences. When faced with the reality of taking a practical decision on accession to the federation he developed cold feet. He held that adequate protection was not provided in respect of the rights arising out of treaties and agreements. It was at this period that Panikkar joined Bikaner. He was well aware of the in-built problems in a service under such a famous, domineering and powerful ruler as Ganga Singh and accepted the job with a feeling that it may last for about six months only! But he continued there as Foreign and Political Minister and later as Prime Minister for ten years!

World War II began in Europe in September 1939, which inevitably altered the political situation in India too. As mentioned earlier, the negotiations that were dragging on at various levels on the accession of the States to the federation came to an end. The Viceroy's proclamation on 3 September, 1939 dragged India also into war. The Maharaja of Bikaner was liberal in his offer of service and help in the war effort. The heir apparent, Sadul Singh too offered "to place his own sword and services at the disposal" of the British King! Panikkar was then Minister in-charge of Education, Foreign Affairs, Legislative Affairs, Public Health, Panchayats, Municipalities and Co-operation.

The situation as on 1943 was that "there were 141 Government Schools, 137 aided schools and 191 private establishments and a degree college in Bikaner". There were substantial arrangements for scholarships for students to go out for higher studies. Many avenues were kept open to students to get admission outside the State in India and abroad with Government assistance. When comprehensive schemes were prepared for implementation for effective teaching of science in colleges, facilities for post-graduate courses in humanities and increased scope for providing

incentives to girls for modern education in general, they were approved without objection. In short, education received a boost in the State due to Panikkar's efforts. Research work in Oriental and Rajasthani lore was encouraged substantially. A Rajasthani Research Institute was founded for Oriental and Rajasthani studies on a serious and scientific basis. The unique collection of manuscripts in Bikaner, some of them dating back to more than twelve hundred years, containing over ten thousand volumes, was classified and arranged. In this regard Panikkar was able to commission the services of Dr. C. Kunhanraja, a Sanskrit scholar of great repute. Incidentally, it was at the instance and suggestion of Panikkar that Dr. Raja accepted the assignment of Professorship in Sanskrit at the University of Tehran in Iran in 1950. Dr. Raja has stated that Panikkar's name deserves to be set down by posterity as the main contributor in reviving Sanskrit study in Iran which had been flourishing for a long time.

Hundreds of rare and valuable manuscripts and Sanskrit works were available in Anup Sanskrit Library and Karni Research Institute. They were neglected and there was not even a good catalogue for reference. Panikkar utilised the occasion of the Golden Jubilee of Ganga Singh's reign to persuade him to agree to a reorganisation of these institutions. With the Maharaja's approval, the library was directly put under Panikkar's charge. He converted it into a public institution for research purposes. The Ganga Oriental Series in Sanskrit and Sadar Oriental Series in Hindi and Rajasthani, were initiated at this time. A large number of rare and invaluable ancient texts were made available to scholars for study. In a short time, the library was able to gain reputation as a prestigious centre of research.

The history of at least some regions within the old Bikaner State can be traced back to prehistoric times. The

Saraswathi river and valley is one which is often considered as the border of the eastern territories of Harappan Culture. "If Harappa and Mohanjo-daro are two capitals of the Harappan empire, one on the North and the other in the South, Kalibanga in Ganganagar district was third capital in the East. References in legends, the vedas, epics, and puranas are many of the places which may have been in this part of India, where civilizations have met, fought for supremacy, facilitated inevitable assimilation and growth. No scholar worth the name can ignore such a region. The deep interest Panikkar had in these matters prompted him to draw up projects for uncovering the secrets lying buried under the sands in this region. The Government of Bikaner commissioned the services of Sir Aurel Stein to undertake preliminary explorations of the Saraswathy Valley. From the first evidences collected by Stein, it was clear that the area was the seat of a great civilization, now buried under the sand. It is not possible to decide when river Saraswathy was buried in the sands. But Kalidasa's allusion to *antas salila saraswathy* shows that by his time the process had been completed and the river had become merely a matter of tradition.

Sir Aurel Stein reached Bikaner city on 17 December 1940, and was the guest of the Maharaja, whom the eminent archeologist described as "a remarkable figure of the old chivalrous type". He was assured by the Maharaja of whatever help he may need in his territory. Unsolicited help also came from the Director of Archaeology, a grant of Rs. 2000/- which permitted him to hire his old surveyor, Mohamed Ayub Khan.

The neglect of the arts and crafts of this region was evident as Rajput history had been overshadowed by contemporary Indo-Muslim history. Rajput art standing between traditional Hindu and Indo-Muslim art was also not studied

as a distinct school. Panikkar helped to set things right by utilising the services of an expert, Dr. Hermann Goetz who undertook a serious study in this field.

As early as 1912, the Maharaja spoke about the need for close association between the ruler and the ruled in the larger interest of the State. A representative Assembly was inaugurated in the State on 10 November 1913. At that time, it consisted of thirty-five members including six members of the Council. Ten were elected members and eighteen nominated. In 1937, the strength rose to forty-five and consisted of six members of the executive council, twenty elected and nineteen nominated members. Increasing the number of elected members, enhancement of the rights and responsibilities of members and such other steps were initiated by Panikkar, keeping in mind similar provisions in Mysore, Travancore and other States. The Panchayat Act No. III of 1928 was supplemented to modernise the set-up and also to bring it in conformity with the general requirements of the day. Providing medical aid to the poor and the needy became a priority. "The grant of full responsible government to the people and the establishment of a fully representative government of all parties in Bikaner was Sardar Panikkar's idea and the Government of Bikaner Act of 1948 was largely based on the advice tendered by him."

In the sphere of industrial, agricultural, co-operative and medical activities, the State made recognisable progress during the time Panikkar was in charge of these departments. The exploration of the rich gypsum deposits of Bikaner is based on his schemes. The total deposits of gypsum in India is estimated at 120.45 crores of tonnes of which about 107.18 are in Rajasthan. These deposits are used by the Sindri Fertilizer Factory and a third of its requirements is met from Rajasthan. The first serious proposal about the Bhakra Dam



Project was initiated in 1919 by H.W. Nicholson. As several States were concerned, a number of expected and unexpected problems arose in connection with its finalisation. The States involved were Patiala, Nabha, Faridkot, Bilaspur and Punjab province. Reaching agreement was a herculean task. The Maharaja's enthusiasm and Panikkar's conspicuous contributions at last found fulfilment when the scheme was taken up for implementation. Sir Sikander Hayat Khan, the then Prime Minister of the Punjab, indicated in a noting that Bikaner would get its due share of water when the scheme was completed. Another matter relates to the Ferozepore Head Works that controlled the water supply to Ganga Canal. At the time of demarcation of the boundary between India and Pakistan for partition, there were indications that the area of the headworks may go to Pakistan. It was sure to jeopardise the vital interests of Bikaner. The matter was actively pursued with Sardar Patel, Nehru and Rajendra Prasad. This was a matter on which all responsible men in Bikaner were agitated. Patel positively stated that mutual interests would be fully protected. The Viceroy suggested that they might take steps to present Bikaner's case before the Boundary Commission. Lala Kanwar Sain, Chief Engineer (Irrigation) and Bakshi Tek Chand presented a memorandum in this regard. On 27 July 1947, Panikkar met the Viceroy regarding this affair. About the meeting, there is an interesting account in the official biography of Mountbatten: "The Maharaja telegraphed Mountbatten asking him to receive Sain and his Prime Minister, Sardar Panikkar, who thereupon flew to Delhi. Abell said that the Viceroy was far too busy to see visitors, but eventually allowed them five minutes at 9 A.M. on 11 August. Panikkar hardly began to speak before Mountbatten interrupted and said that the matter was no concern of his. Radcliffe reported to the British Government, not to the Viceroy. In that case, said Panikkar, Bikaner would go back on its decision

and accede to Pakistan. Mountbatten changed colour, but said nothing."

A sensitive matter assigned to Panikkar by Ganga Singh was a dispute in Kutch. The future of the ruler, Maharao Khengarji III, was seriously threatened with ouster from the *gadi*. Maharao was the maternal uncle of Ganga Singh, and a highly respected, good-natured, elderly ruler. Incidentally, he was one of the rulers of Indian States who had occupied the *gadi* for the longest period in any State, sixty years, when he passed away in 1942! He incurred the displeasure of the rulers in Delhi on very flimsy grounds.

With intrigues and conspiracies hatched by the heir-apparent, with the active connivance of the Resident Gibson and others, a hostile attitude to the old Maharao was created, to force him to lay down power. But he was not willing to oblige and decided instead to put up a strong fight against this arbitrary action. He sought Ganga Singh's help and Panikkar was deputed to settle the affair. Panikkar met the Private Secretary to the Viceroy, Sir Gilbert Laithwaite, and others in this regard and was able to defuse the tension.

Though it was a closely guarded secret, Panikkar came to know that Ganga Singh was afflicted with cancer and might not live long. He was under the treatment of the best available experts in India. The Ruler underwent an operation at Bombay after which he was taken to Madras for expert care. But the chances of his recovery were remote. In spite of these physical problems, the Maharaja continued to take interest in Government and political affairs.

During this period, Ganga Singh received a secret letter from the Viceroy about a proposed conference in the U.S.A. Panikkar was included in the delegation to represent Indian India. The Maharaja approved the proposal and instructed

Panikkar to attend the conference. The promoters of this conference were members of the American Council of the Institute of Pacific Relations. The Council was intended as a forum for discussion, not only of Pacific problems, but also of the British Empire in general and India in particular. The Britishers felt that the inclusion of India as a subject of discussion, indicated that the American Council was not without prejudice. Sir Zafurullah Khan and Sir A. Ramaswami Mudaliar were included as senior members; the others were Begum Shah Nawaz, Meherchand Khanna and Sir Ranganathan. The conference was proposed to be held in December 1942 in the U.S.A., but the venue was subsequently shifted to Mont Tremblant, Quebec. The Indian delegation was claimed to have been sent by the Indian Institute of International Affairs. But this claim was denied by Pandit H.N. Kunzru. Some difficulties arose in the final stages over the credentials of the delegation. But the Viceroy, Lord Linlithgow, was confident that it was a strong one, well qualified to give a balanced view of the Indian case. The Viceroy suggested to L.S. Amery, the Secretary of State, to make it clear to Mudaliar that Britain would not welcome and indeed would be most strongly opposed to any interference by U.S.A. or China in the settlement concerning the Indian problem. It was the general feeling in India, and was also presumed by most of the American, Canadian and other members, that the Indian representatives were poor, deluded, stooges of the British.

Panikkar started from Gwalior on 12 November 1942, on his journey. Rao Bahadur Meherchand Khanna and the Secretary to the delegation, A.S.B. Shah, also boarded the aircraft there which was a flying boat. The War was on and they took a route touching Karachi, Basra, Cairo, Khartoum, Lagos (Nigeria), Balem (Brazil), Baltimore (USA) and took more than fifteen days of flying time! From Baltimore, it was an easy flight to New York and then to the destination,

Quebec in Canada. During this journey Panikkar met Guy Wint, who later became a close friend. Incidentally, it is mentioned that it was at the instance of Wint that Panikkar rendered his Malayalam poem *Chinta Tharangini* (Waves of Thought) into English.

On his way back, in, New York, Panikkar got the opportunity to meet an eminent Chinese scholar, Hu Shin, described as the Sankaracharya of China. His commentary on Confucious is often compared to the *Brahma Sutra* commentary of Sankara. Panikkar left New York for London on 18 January 1943, by a bomber aircraft. This was to him an unusual first experience.

In London, Panikkar called on L.S. Amery, Secretary to State, on 20 January 1943. The Secretary of State has thus recorded his impression of Panikkar: "Panikkar flew in yesterday very anxious to be allowed to fly on to India in view of Bikaner's condition. His story is that the heir and other Ministers are not on very good terms and that he can help keeping things straight, but I dare say he is also naturally concerned with his own future position. He talks volubly but not very audibly about the position of the Princes. In his view, the whole pressure for cleaning up the smaller units will have to come from the Crown's representative. The Chamber of Princes, he thinks, a mistake in so far as it includes much too large a proportion of little States who are definitely obstructive to reform. That I felt was also rather the Jam Saheb's view. He seems to have been converted to the necessity for accepting Pakistan and wants the States to keep out of British India as well, his arrangement, so far as I could gather it, being that of some loose defensive arrangement between Pakistan, Hindu India and the States. He did not, however, enter upon a discussion of the Federation or grouping of the States among themselves. He also dwelt on the importance of better cultural



relations between Britain and India. On the whole, I was not very much impressed by him."

Maharaja Ganga Singh passed away on 2 February 1943 at Bombay. Panikkar was in England at that time. Maharaj Kumar Sadul Singh succeeded Ganga Singh as the twenty-second ruler of Bikaner. Panikkar could reach Bikaner by the end of March. Sadul Singh was experienced in state-craft and administration and had been training himself to manage such affairs during Ganga Singh's rule. The new Maharaja was not happy with majority of the old ministers and wanted to dispense with the services of those in whom he had no confidence. When Panikkar returned, he was received well and allowed to continue in the old post.

It will be appropriate to mention some important developments in India and abroad that had some direct bearing on the matters that are discussed here. Winston Churchill (1874-1965) became Prime Minister and formed a national Government in Britain when Chamberlain resigned his post in 1940. A proposal made by the Viceroy on 8 August 1940 to associate the leaders of Indian political parties in the governance of India was rejected by the major Indian parties, the Congress and the League. The Japanese entry into the War and the lightning speed with which they overran East Asia and came to the borders of India, persuaded the British to make a new effort "to rally all the forces of Indian life to guard their land from the menace of the invader". Sir Staford Crips and Lord Privy Seal came to India with a proposal which was "to be accepted or rejected as a whole". In fact, the Congress and the League rejected it in toto on 10 April 1942! The Cripps' Mission brought home to the Rulers the discomfoting realisation that when the interests of British India and the States come into conflict, H.M's Government would almost certainly let down the States.

Then came the next major event of the century — the Quit India resolution of the All India Congress Committee on 8 August 1942. In this, it was repeated “with all emphasis the demand for the withdrawal of British power from India. On the declaration of India’s independence, a provisional Government will be formed and free India will become an ally of the United Nations sharing with them in the trials and tribulations of the joint enterprise of the struggle for freedom”. The Congress leaders were put in jail and there was temporarily an eclipse of the major political party, which inevitably left the field free for the Muslim League. A new viceroy, Lord Wavell, was sworn in on 20 October 1943.

According to Panikkar the new ruler, Sadul Singh, was far less capable than his predecessor. His weakness for flattery, vanity, influence of favourites, inordinate desire for power and property, out-weighed his capabilities. Palace intrigues increased. The most influential person in the Court was a mediocre man, Pratap Singh. Panikkar was clever enough to consolidate his position by getting some assurances in the beginning itself from the Maharaja about his conditions of continued service in Bikaner. Since he was an outsider not attached to any group or interests, he was used by the Ruler to defuse crisis or tension that arose. In fact, he was the only stable factor in a place of shifting sands of loyalties! But both viewed the other with a certain amount of suspicion, though in self-interest both wished the survival of the other! “He knew that Indian politics were in the melting-pot and that the British rule was ending. In this situation, he no doubt felt that a suitable adviser was indispensable in the new set-up. This explains his insistence on my continued service.” Panikkar goes on: “Unlike civil servants, the Dewans of Indian States were not precluded from political activity. My stay in Bikaner thus helped me to keep in touch with Congress leaders on constitutional questions. It also happened that at this critical

period, the Dewans of all the major Rajput States were south Indians and we were thus able to work as a powerful group in the political scene."

There were a number of traditional taxes levied in Bikaner. If a marriage was accomplished a fine, *Rith*, was imposed on the party. Villagers were required to pay annually a tax towards maintenance of temples in the State, which was in addition to taxes for repair of forts and expenses of royal house-holds. Maharaja Anup Singh introduced a body tax (*Angi-ri-Bachh*) for both bipeds as well as quadrupeds! Gambling tax was a fixed amount.

Jagirdars were given lands in lieu of their services. There were different classes of jagirdars, according to the income, relations with the ruler, or services expected. The other important person was the Thakur-Rajput chieftain. Three-fourths of Bikaner was held by them at the time Panikkar became Dewan. Traditionally, the Thakurs of Pokaran and Ahua of Marwar and of Salumber in Marwar enjoyed privileges of attesting the grant orders of the rulers of Marwar and Mewar. The Thakurs of Bagri enjoyed an exceptional honour of putting the *tika* on the forehead of the new chief at the time of his installation, with blood drawn from the thumb and investing the Maharaja with the sword of office.

About the situation as it prevailed when he took over, Panikkar writes: "Because the writ of the Maharaja did not run within their principalities, it is difficult to exaggerate the oppression practised by the Thakurs. I used to counsel Maharaja Ganga Singh, as the Vice-Chairman of the Council, that this set-up had to change for the State's own good; but as Rajput partisan he kept on postponing action". An opportunity arose for Panikkar to test his desire to change the situation. This was after the assumption of authority by Sadul Singh as ruler. With his agreement, the Dewan took action

against a leading Thakur Raja of Sandur. He was deposed and put in court custody, which created panic among the chieftains. They later fell in line with the reforms introduced in the new set-up."

On the suggestion of Panikkar, the Maharaja decided to make an endowment to the Benares Hindu University for ten scholarships for Indian students from British Commonwealth countries. Panikkar wrote to R.N. Banerjee, Secretary, Department of Commonwealth Relations, wishing to know whether the Department had any objection to the scheme. It was Pandit Nehru who replied to this letter. Addressing the Maharaja, he wrote in his letter dated 18 March 1947: ... "I am happy to learn this and congratulate you on the step you are taking .... The Government of India have themselves been thinking of making such arrangements. You have happily forestalled them ... I am glad to learn that you propose, as a part of this scheme, to have a building attached to the Hindu University for such students."

The stay in Bikaner proved to be productive from the point of view of Panikkar's literary efforts. He was able to familiarise himself in depth with some of the Sanskrit classics by devoting available spare time for this use on a systematic basis. The first work he took up was Kalidasa's *Raghuvamsa* with a commentary by Mallinatha followed by *Kumara Sambhavam*, *Megha Dooth* and *Sakuntalam*. Jain classics written in simple Sanskrit were his next attractions. Panikkar began with Hemachandra Soori's *Trisalaka Sasthi Purusha Charitram*, where many tales borrowed from Hindu puranas are retold with twists provided by appropriate and agreeable deviations, which especially were of interest to him as a historian.

Panikkar wrote a short book on the *Buddha* — an account of his life and teachings. It was published later in



1968. In its Preface, he has noted that the brief account of the life and teachings of the Buddha makes no claim to scholarship or research. It was meant for the general reader who has no time for doctrinal controversies or sectarian disputes but desirous of knowing the generally accepted facts of Buddha's life and an outline of his teachings. A selection from the sacred texts of Buddhism is added to enable the reader to reach his own conclusions on the main tenets of Buddhism.

Dr. Kunjan Raja, who undertook the responsibility of reorganisation of the Sanskrit Manuscript Library at Bikaner, used to stay in Bikaner for about three months every year during the period of his service with the State. This great scholar guided Panikkar in his adventures into the fascinating land of Sanskrit literature. During this time, he took up *Katha Sarith Sagaram* of Somadeva for daily reading. The benefit he derived out of this study is well utilised by him in his historical works. These stories illuminated many areas of India's history and facilitated better comprehension and interpretation. It has given aspects of Pataliputra and has described it as a home of culture, learning and fine arts and was the queen of the cities of the world. The evidence of the Gunadhya story confirms the tantric forms of worship prevalent in the first century B.C. Then again, there are numerous instances in this Sanskrit classic, which embodies stories of the Sathavahana period, of ships sailing to Kataha. The story of Dvasmita, Chandraswami, etc., narrates the sea routes. Recent investigations of Quaritch Wales have fully borne out the traditional route followed by Indian merchants.

It was a meeting with the then President of Philippines, Manuel Kuyisona in London in 1943, that inspired Panikkar to write his book *The Future of S.E. Asia — An Indian View*, published in 1943.

*Chadukthi Mukthavali*, a collection of 102 individual *slokas* in Sanskrit meters, was a product of this period. The *slokas* dealt with a variety of suggestive ideas, all stray thoughts, rendered freely on the pattern of *Amaruka Satakam* in Sanskrit and *Vilasalathika* in Malayalam. *Mandodari*, though a drama in the Sanskrit pattern, is more a poetic work than a drama. The useful and scholarly *Introduction* is a detailed discourse on the current trends in drama in European languages.

Another creative work is *Champu Prabandham* in the typical traditional Sanskrit style on one of the adventures of Hyderali, under the title *Hyder Naikken*. Out of the chaos which preceded the usurpation of power, Hyderali evolved an ordered, disciplined and powerful army. This enabled him to consolidate his position. The historical episode, basic to building the beautiful edifices of *Champu Prabandham* is one which has association with Kerala. The invasion of Hyder, the defeat of Kolathunadu, and the tragic end of a woman of character, the magnanimity of the invader, are described with sensitivity. It was published in September 1940 with a Foreword by Parayath E. Rama Menon, a long-time friend of the poet. The first Malayalam *champu* composed towards the end of the 13th century, *Unniyachi Charitam* is regarded as the first *Kavya* in the language. Panikkar's attempt was to revive interest in this form, which was not in vogue for a long time.

Another work of significance was *Kerala Simham*, published in 1941. It is a historical novel on some of the exploits of a Kerala Prince, Pazhassiraja, who raised the banner of revolt against the British rulers, about half a century before the 1857 revolt. He was a prince of a small principality of Kottayam in North Malabar. He refused to surrender his birth right, freedom. Instead, he organised strong resistance to

the British imperialists who tried to liquidate him. Col. Wellesley, the future Duke of Wellington, who defeated Napoleon at Waterloo, spearheaded the campaign against Pazhassiraja. With the loyal support of the people of all classes and communities, the Raja held Col. Wellesley at bay for about six years! These historical facts are utilised by the novelist for weaving an enchanting work, rich with patriotic fervour. The book is "inscribed in sincere friendship" to K.T. Kunji Kammaran Nambiar of Koodali, an intimate friend who arranged for Panikkar an extensive tour of Malabar in June 1940. The novel was received well by the critics and the public. A rendering of *Kerala Simham* in Bengali was published by Bomana Biswanathan in 1960. A reviewer of *Sunday Amrita Bazar Patrika* (25 September 1960) found it "very difficult to conceive that a man like Panikkar, who had to work so much in other spheres, can find time to write a historical novel pulsating with excitement and vibrant beauty."

*Dhruva Swamini* is another drama in the traditional Sanskrit form. It was published in 1941 with an *Introduction* by Mahakavi Vallathol Narayana Menon. Chandra Gupta II, known as Sakari Vikramaditya was the son of Samudra Gupta by his wife, Datta Devi. After Samudra Gupta's death, his son Ramo Gupta by another wife, came to the throne. Ramo Gupta tried to buy off the invaders, the Sakas, by pusillanimous methods, including giving his wife Dhruva Swamini to Saka King, Pravishkan. But Chandra Gupta killed Pravishkan in an ingenious way and later accepted Dhruva Swamini as his own Queen. The drama is well written and several episodes reveal the dramatist's poetic skill and dramatic sense in a convincing manner.

*Sandhya Ragam* is a compilation of forty sonnets. Though at that time, some poets of the younger generation in Malayalam accepted the sonnet form for expression of

sentiments, there was no proper understanding of its scope and purpose. In his illuminating Preface to this book, Panikkar gave the salient aspects of this poetic form.

A pamphlet on *Indian States*, No. 4 in the Oxford University Press series on Indian affairs, was contributed by Panikkar in 1942. In this booklet, he traced in general terms the making of the Indian States in the background of the events that led to the establishment of British power in India.

Though it was published very much later, Panikkar completed a new translation of *Ruabiyat* of Omar Khayyam into Malayalam during this time. It came out under the title *Rasika Rasayanam*.

*Attakkatha*, the basic literary structure of which Kathakali is a choreographical and dramatic presentation, is a major branch of Malayalam literature. Unnai Warier's *Nalacharitham* stands even today as the high water mark of this poetic genre. During recent times no serious attention is given by writers to this branch, though there is tremendous interest in Kathakali as an art form. Very few poets attempted to compose *Attakkatha* on stories other than puranas or epics of India. Panikkar was the first person to make an attempt in this line with his *Daveedu Vijayam* (Victory of David), a story from the *Old Testament*. This was composed by him some time towards the end of 1940 and forwarded to his friend and Kathakali enthusiast, Vallathol Narayana Menon, in April 1941. The poet felt that it was a good piece fit for stage presentation, lasting for 3-4 hours.

Panikkar wrote an interesting pamphlet for the Indian Council of World Affairs on a topic of interest at that time, *The Basis of an Indo-British Treaty*. The treaty should be designed to secure the freedom of Britain and India, in their self interest. The maintenance of the full independence of the



parties and the support for all action necessary for it is what the treaty should endeavour to achieve. This was published in 1946, but did not evoke much interest or inspire significant discussion.

*India and the Indian Ocean*, (1945) is another book of significance related to the strategic importance of the Indian Ocean. Very few people have taken up this theme for serious study. By inviting attention to this area of vital importance, he proposed certain defence arrangements that may serve well this area. India's maritime interests during earlier periods were also touched upon to correct the impression that ancient Indians were not interested in seafaring activities. It also highlighted the influence of sea power on Indian history. This subject came up for greater attention in another major work which Panikkar undertook about ten years later. The present book attracted a good deal of attention from historians and defence strategists.

## CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY

**A**S already mentioned, the normal political process in the country came to a standstill with the outbreak of World War II. Subsequent events led to the resignation of the Congress Ministries, which ended the uneasy truce between the British and the nationalists, represented by the Congress. It handed over India's future to Jinnah who was waiting for such an opportunity. Imaginatively and cleverly, he used this psychological moment for a call to Muslims to observe Deliverance Day. This was the beginning of the emergence of a new force to be reckoned with in the settlement of the Indian problem. From now on, Lord Linlithgow began to lean more and more on the support of the Muslim League. The Jamsaheb of Navanagar was the Chancellor of the Chamber at that time. In a resolution of 12 March 1940, the Chamber recorded its emphatic and firm view, that in any future constitution of India, the essential guarantees and safeguards for the preservation of the sovereignty and autonomy of the Indian States and for the protection of their rights arising from treaties, sanads, engagements and other work should be effectively provided. We may also note here that the Viceroy in a statement on 8 August 1940, for the first time conceded indirectly the demand for a constituent assembly. The demands for a constituent assembly by political parties in India began in April 1936, when the Congress in their resolution declared that no constitution imposed by an outside authority would be acceptable.

The fortunes of the War forced Neville Chamberlain to yield place to Winston Churchill in May 1940. The Marquis of Zetland was replaced by L.S. Amery as Secretary of State for India. Sir Stafford Cripps was sent on a mission to negotiate on the basis of a draft declaration with the parties concerned

in India, to solve the Indian tangle. The political environment favoured the building up and strengthening of the Muslim League, while the Congress drifted confusedly, to finally embark on the Quit India movement of 8 August 1942. Bereft of effective leadership, the agitation was carried on by underground workers and quickly turned itself into a chaotic battle with authority.

The Nawab of Bhopal, Hamidulla Khan, was elected to the Chancellorship of the Chamber in 1943. He was the youngest son of the Begum of Bhopal. The British Government recognised him as heir, against Muslim law, after the old Begum paid a visit to London. It was widely believed that Lord Birkenhead must have accepted a large bribe for this service. When he briefed Lord Wavell before his departure on retirement as Viceroy for England Lord Linlithgow mentioned that the Nawab was sometimes like a mischievous boy with a catapult.

Hamidullah Khan's hatred of Panikkar has already been mentioned and his (Panikkar) estrangement from the Chamber began after the death of Maharaja Ganga Singh. This time the Nawab was very particular to get elected as Chancellor and manoeuvred to ensure it. There were not a few who were aware of his capacity to create trouble. In order to strengthen his position after election, he wanted his nominee, Nawab of Chattari, to be the Vice-Chairman of the Ministers' Committee. There was strong opposition to this and Panikkar stood against Chattari, but lost with a margin of two votes. Maharaja of Bikaner, Sadul Singh, was a close friend of the Chancellor; but as more and more instances came to the Maharaja's notice regarding the Nawab's strong communal feelings, Sadul Singh began, as far as possible, to avoid him. Singh's indifference was interpreted by the Nawab to be due to the manipulations of Panikkar. In the meeting of the Chamber on

18 September 1943, an attempt was made by the Chancellor, Hamidullah Khan, to give notice of a resolution to register the strong feelings, misgivings and apprehensions about the political developments in India. But the President of the Chamber, Viceroy Wavell, did not allow it to be moved. However, the Nawab engineered, by force or bluff, the resignation of the standing committee, as a protest against the action of the Government, along with the Chancellor and Pro-Chancellor. The letter was received by the Viceroy on 3 December 1944. The resignation of the Princes from the Chamber made a sensation in the Press. The crisis itself was solved when the resignations were withdrawn in June 1945, as there was no other solution at hand!

The third unofficial conference on British Commonwealth was held in London between 12 February and 3 March 1945. The delegates were selected by the Institute of International Affairs of the Commonwealth country concerned. Sir Zafrulla Khan was the leader of the Indian delegation. Sir Maharaja Singh, Sir B.P.S. Sing Roy and K.M. Panikkar were among the delegates. The Nawab of Bhopal inducted his own man as a counter-weight to Panikkar. This was because of the Nawab's serious suspicion that Panikkar might work against the Chancellor while in England. Mir Maqbool Mahmood thus found a birth in the Indian delegation. This was not appreciated by the Viceroy, Wavell. Sir Sultan Ahmed, Member for Information and Broadcasting from August 1943, was under pressure from the Nawab of Bhopal and the Jamsaheb in this affair. The Viceroy also had a feeling that Sir Ahmed may have committed himself before referring the matter for his clearance. Since the conference was not an official one, Wavell did not turn down Sultan Ahmed's suggestion.

There were eighteen delegates from U.K., ten each from



Canada and India; New Zealand and South Africa had six each; Australia had five; two observers were from Burma and one from Southern Rhodesia. India, by convention, ranked as a Dominion and its delegation rivalled that of Britain in distinction. The Conference devoted a good deal of its time to Commonwealth migration. When they arrived, the delegates received a number of papers as background information. From India, there were two papers relating to migration: "Population Problems" in S.E. Asia by Radhakamal Mukerjee and "The status of Indians in the Empire" by An Onlooker. From internal evidence it was presumed the "Onlooker" was probably H.N. Kunzru.

Panikkar prepared for the Conference two pamphlets, one on Imperial Organisation and the other on the strategic problems of the Indian Ocean. Wavell forwarded them to Amery as they were "interesting and contained a lot of good sense".

The points repeatedly stressed by Indian delegates at the conference were the need to make political moves in India for a speedy settlement of matters that had come to the forefront. The immediate necessity was to negotiate with the parties concerned as to how best power can be transferred to Indians. According to one author, there was one forward-looking Indian proposal: "that as rights and obligations of citizenship in the Commonwealth are united by allegiance to the Crown..... instead of local citizenship, there should be a Commonwealth citizenship giving all citizens of the Commonwealth the same rights throughout the Commonwealth".

The conference was a success and the Indian delegates were delighted with the reception they received from their fellow delegates. The India Office arranged a large sherry

party for them at Eton Square and had all the world to meet them.

On return from the unofficial conference on British Commonwealth, Panikkar brought to the notice of the Maharaja of Bikaner, Sadul Singh, the change in attitude of the powers that be in England towards the Indian problem. He specifically pointed out that no one was prepared to give the Princes' claim serious consideration, if it stood in the way of a democratic constitution for the rest of India. The British were feeling that their interests were not necessarily strengthened by supporting the Princes' cause. His suggestion was that the Princes should take early action to safeguard their primary interests. A meeting of the leading princes and ministers should be called without loss of time to discuss the whole question. Panikkar submitted a secret note on the above lines to Maharaja Sadul Singh, who, in turn, was prompt to alert the Chancellor, Nawab of Bhopal. They felt that the departure of Viceroy Wavell in March 1945 to discuss the future of India with the British Cabinet, was proof of this, if proof was required. The Chancellor convened a meeting at Bombay on 1 May 1945. Those who attended included Hamidulla Khan, Chancellor, Yadavendra Singh of Patiala, Sadul Singh of Bikaner, Digvijay Singh Jamsaheb and Ministers, Nawab of Chatterji, Hyderabad, Pulla Reddy, Mysore, C.P. Ramaswamy Aiyer, Travancore, Raja Gyan Nath, Indore, T. Vijayaraghavachariar, Udaipur, Liaquat Hayat Khan, Bhopal, Harbhit Singh Mallick, Patiala and K.M. Panikkar, Bikaner. The meeting decided to select a strong negotiating committee consisting of Princes and Ministers to negotiate with Indian leaders and the British Government. The attempt of the Nawab of Bhopal to assume plenipotentiary status as negotiator for the Princes, was thwarted by the strong resistance of those present.

The major world event, the surrender of Germany, took place on 7 May 1945. The Wavell plan, "to ease the political situation and to advance India towards her goal of full self-Government", was declared by the Viceroy on his return from London, in his broadcast on 14 June 1945. It paved the way for the Simla Conference of 1945, attended by twenty-two members of political parties. But it also failed to reach an agreement. This was "a last opportunity to the forces of nationalism to fight a rearguard action to preserve the integrity of the country. When the battle was lost, the waves of communalism quickly engulfed it." When a correspondent, a close friend, asked Jinnah why he had spurned the Wavell plan at the time when he won his point of parity for the League with the Congress, his reply was — "Am I a fool to accept this, when I am offered Pakistan on a platter?"

The surrender of Japan on 15 August 1945, was announced by Prime Minister Attlee. A special Cabinet Mission, consisting of Lord Pethic Lawrance, Sir Stafford Cripps and A.V. Alexander, arrived in India on 23 March 1946, to do all they could to resolve the political problem. In spite of these efforts, no agreement was reached. Their major suggestion was to set up at once an interim government, until such time as a new Constitution could be brought into being. With regard to Princely States, they were clear that paramountcy could neither be retained by the British Crown nor transferred to the new government. They left the matter for negotiations during the building up of the new constitutional structure.

The Standing Committee of the Chamber met in Bombay in June 1946, to consider the proposals of the Cabinet Mission. They felt that it provided the machinery for the attainment of Indian independence as well as a fair basis for further negotiations. A negotiating committee was constituted for this purpose.

On 2 September 1946, the Viceroy, Lord Wavell, swore in seven members of his Interim Government led by Nehru. In a message to the nation, Nehru said: "Destiny has conspired to test us in new ways and we have answered this call of destiny with courage and faith in India's future. The dawn of her freedom that has inspired us for so long, beckons to us again and seems nearer realisation. May we prove worthy servants of India and her people".

An announcement was made from Delhi on 16 September 1946, that the States Negotiations Committee would hold talks on behalf of the Indian States in connection with their representation in the Constituent Assembly. It consisted of the Nawab of Bhopal (Chancellor), the Maharaja of Patiala, Jamsaheb of Navanagar, the Maharaja of Dungarpur, Mirza Ismail (Dewan of Hyderabad), C.P. Ramaswamy Aiyer (Dewan of Travancore), Sultan Ahmed (Constitutional Advisor to the Chamber of Princes), K.M. Panikkar (Dewan of Bikaner) and A. Ramaswami Mudaliar (Dewan of Mysore).

In a memorandum circulated by the Maharaja of Bikaner, Sadul Singh, the Indian rulers were given relevant arguments in favour of joining the Constituent Assembly at an early date. "The only safe policy was to work with the stabilising elements in British India to create a centre at least for as large a section of India as possible, to start with, which would be leaving it open for any other part to come in at a later time. Such a procedure would safeguard both the States and British India in the vacuum that would be created by the withdrawal of the British Government. It would maintain peace, order and good government and prevent strife." The architect of this memorandum was K.M. Panikkar.

In a letter from Gopalaswami Ayyangar to Nehru dated 18 November 1946, the method of representation of the States in the Constituent Assembly was proposed. The



principles he enunciated were: (i) where a State or a group of States is entitled to only one seat, it would be filled by election and (2) in the case of more than one seat, the Prime Minister should be one of the persons returned by the electorate. Later, in the concluding session of the joint meeting of the States Committee of the Constituent Assembly and the States Negotiating Committee of the Chamber of Princes, on 2 March 1947, it was agreed that the minimum of not less than 50% of the total representatives of States shall be elected by the elected members of Legislature or where such legislature did not exist, of other electoral colleges.

Invitations were issued to the elected members to the Constituent Assembly to attend its first meeting on 9 December 1946, in New Delhi. This occasion of historical importance thus ushered in a new era in the history of India. It was the culmination of popular awakening to a sense of national solidarity and high destiny, which began nearly a century ago.

In its resolution dated 29 January 1947, the Chamber of Princes declared that the States Negotiating Committee is the only authoritative body, competent to conduct negotiations on behalf of States. They were also given authority to negotiate the terms for participation of States in the Constituent Assembly. Another important stipulation was that the terms and conditions had to be ratified by the Constitutional Advisory Committee if they are to be valid. This resolution created much controversy not only among the Rulers but also among people in British India. Individual approaches to members of the committee were then made and it was suggested to some that it was unwise to unite under the leadership of a "Muslim Chairman" who might be in sympathy with Pakistan than with India. Some Rulers were persuaded, often by their Ministers, whose ambitions lay with

an independent Central Government, to join the Constituent Assembly whatever their Negotiating Committee recommended. The Committee thus began to disintegrate. The appointment of Lord Mountbatten was announced in February 1947, to replace Wavell as Viceroy. This was an unexpected development even to Wavell which he described "as clever from their point of view. Dickie's personality may perhaps accomplish what I have failed to do." The reaction of Winston Churchill was true to tradition, and characteristic: "I am bound to say that the whole thing wears the aspect of an attempt by the Government to make use of brilliant war figures in order to cover up a melancholy and disastrous transaction".

A Joint Meeting of the States Committee of the Constituent Assembly and the States Negotiating Committee appointed by the Chamber of Princes was held on 8 February 1947, in New Delhi. The Nawab of Bhopal, who presided, said that the final decision in regard to the entry of States into the Union of India would rest with the States. The Cabinet Mission's statement said that the States "will retain all subjects and powers, other than those ceded by them to the Union". He also made clear that the constitution of the State, their territorial integrity, dynastic succession, etc., would not be altered without their consent.

In the second joint meeting held on 9 February, the Nawab raised the question of paramountcy, inherent powers, territorial integrity and fundamental rights. The Nawab was of the view that no authority could be given to the Union to interfere in the internal situation in the States on the plea of fundamental rights. Another assertion made by him was that Union constitution above would be settled according to the Cabinet Mission plan. That would not deal with the internal administration of States. He promised to join the Constituent

Assembly, only after consulting the Committee of Princes. Sir C.P.'s view was that the States in the preliminary stage should be represented by the States Negotiating Committee, which should have formed part of the Constituent Assembly. He also stated that 10 or 15 States would get individual representation. The Secretariat of the Assembly and Chamber of princes were asked together to draw up detailed proposals for the allocation of 93 seats allotted to the States for consideration before the next meeting.

The British Prime Minister, Attlee, made a statement in the House of Commons on 20 February 1947, indicating the desire of the British Government to hand over responsibility to authorities established by a Constitution approved by all parties in India, in accordance with the Cabinet Missions plan. It has, as noted by Pandit Nehru in his letter dated 27 February 47, to V.K. Krishna Menon, "Shaken up people here and forced them to think furiously. The Princes are meeting here in large numbers and again there is an attempt on the part of Bhopal and his supporters to sabotage the Constituent Assembly, in so far as they can do it". A resolution at the initiative of the Nawab was adopted by the Committee of States Ministers on 27 February. It recommended the termination of the States Rulers' discussions with the Negotiating Committee of the Constituent Assembly. This was, according to the Rulers, due to the insistence in the British Government's statement on the functioning of the Constituent Assembly. However, the Standing Committee of the Chamber of Princes rejected it on 28 February. It was rumoured that the person behind this effort was the Nawab, who had himself drafted the resolution. But he felt happy "that a pronouncement has been formally made that paramountcy will disappear when Great Britain withdraws itself from the Indian administrative scene and that the States will resume their

independence". Nehru felt that the Princes "have been encouraged by Attlee's reference to the States and probably imagine that they can get better terms by standing out of the Constituent Assembly. On the other hand, some other Princes object to this ..... Bhopal, the cleverest of them, wants to help the Muslim League as far as possible. C.P. Ramaswamy Aiyer continues to play an intricate and double game and generally gives trouble. Behind them all is the Political Department intriguing and trying to put a spanner into everything."

A joint meeting of States Committee & States Negotiating Committee was held in New Delhi on 2 March 1947.

Sri N. Gopalaswami Ayyangar refuted K.M. Panikkar's views regarding cases where no direct election was possible. Where direct election was not possible, nomination by the Ruler could not be called a camouflage, but it was a method of indirect election. Panikkar pointed out the case of Sikhs in Bikaner and repeated his argument that representatives of those communities in the States which could not be elected to the State legislature because of their small number, would have to be nominated. Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel replied that election by nominated members would be a camouflage and suggested 25 per cent in addition by this camouflage. On 28 April 1947, representatives of Baroda, Bikaner, Cochin, Jaipur, Jodhpur, Patiala and Rewa took their seats in the Constituent Assembly. It was the beginning of the end of the United front put up by the Chamber of Princes.

The representatives were welcomed by the Chairman of the Constituent Assembly, who concluded his speech with the following words: "Let us not be daunted by the immensity of the task or diverted from our purpose by developments which may take place, but go ahead with faith in ourselves and the country which has sent us here". Then, after expressing thanks to the welcome extended by the Chairman, Panikkar,



who represented Bikaner, said: "This was, indeed, the day which we have been looking forward to. It is a dream come true, for at no time in India's history has a representative gathering of people who can speak on behalf of the whole of India met and taken counsel". He thanked the Negotiating Committee for making it possible for them to sit there and the courage, wisdom and vision with which they approached the question of Indian States. He refuted the insinuation that there has been any coercion of one part by another. We consider that organising India's freedom is as much our duty as it is of others. Looked at from that point of view, there can be no question of our waiting and seeing. We want no favour nor do we want to confer obligations. All that we want is that our problems should be viewed sympathetically by this august body, in a sense of friendliness as affecting a large part of India. We, on our part, promise in all humility to work for the betterment of India and for the Union which we all desire to see established."

Mountbatten took over as Viceroy on 23 March 1947. He was glad that Nehru had not been put in charge of States, which, he believed, would have wrecked everything. He reported: "Patel, who is essentially a realist and very sensible, is going to take it over. Even better, V.P. Menon was to be Secretary."

A crucial meeting, which more or less completed the split and final elimination of the leadership of the Nawab of Bhopal in the Chamber of Princes, was held with Sardar Patel on 24 July, just a day before the first and last meeting of the Chamber called by the Viceroy, Lord Mountbatten. At this meeting with Patel, rulers of Patiala, Gwalior, Bikaner and Navanagar were present. The Chief Ministers present were, B.L. Mitter, A. Ramaswami Mudaliar (Mysore), Venketachar (Jodhpur), K.M. Panikkar (Bikaner).

Panikkar, on a later occasion, touched upon the part played by his Maharaja, Sadul Singh, in the negotiations. "It is not to be thought that this decision was taken without some internal difficulties. There was an influential group of Princes and ministers whose approach to the question was not that of an Indian Union, but of a Union of Princely India, a third partition, which was meant to break up the body of Hindustan into bits and leave it bleeding and incapable. It was the firmness of His Highness the Maharaja and his friends that prevented this dangerous move."

Guy Wint, longtime friend of Panikkar, has given an assessment of the work Panikkar had done with regard to the future of Indian Princes. "They (i.e., the Princes) might have refused to go quietly and might have complicated very greatly the transition to the national India. But they acquiesced in their own liquidation and the credit for this goes primarily to Panikkar's diplomacy, persuasion, skill in drafting difficult State documents and Machiavellianism. Other advisers of the princes were there to share the credit, but he undoubtedly supplied the principal ideas on strategy and spun from his own brain the silken thread with which the Princes were induced to bind themselves and led them without their protesting violently up the precipice from which they hurled themselves.

There were, in all, thirteen important committees and sub-committees of the Constituent Assembly. The advisory Committee had three sub-committees, one of which was a sub-committee on Fundamental Rights. Its members were Acharya Kripalani (Chairman), Alladi Krishnaswami Aiyer, Maulana Abdul Kalam Azad, Sardar Harnam Singh, Dr. Ambedkar, K.T. Shah, M.R. Masani, Rajkumari Amrit Kaur and K.M. Munshi. The President of the Constituent Assembly nominated Smt. Hansa Mehta, Jairamdas Daulatram and

Panikkar on the Committee. Panikkar was nominated to represent the States. He was included in two other committees also — the Union Constitution Committee and the Ad-hoc Committee on National flag.

The Union Constitution Committee was established on 30 April 1947. A questionnaire to ascertain the views of a cross-section of eminent persons was circulated in May by B.N. Rao, Constitutional Advisor. Panikkar was one of the few, who returned the document giving answers with full details on each and every point raised. This was the first exercise to compile various views relevant for the framing of the Constitution. Panikkar proposed in that document, that the head of the Indian Union should be named "President", Several others were also of the same view, which was finally accepted. About the term of the President, he held that it may be for a period of four years with eligibility for re-election for two consecutive terms. About the duration of the term, there were differences. Finally, it was decided to limit it to five years. His view was that the President should be irremovable during his term. But the Constitution Committee and, later, many members of Constituent Assembly, proposed a provision for impeachment and removal for certain specific reasons, based on special procedure. He was eligible for re-election but the number of times was not specified. Panikkar was one of those who proposed for the President powers of pardon, and to remit or commute punishment. The matter was not simple, as previously the rulers of Indian States had enjoyed these privileges. Some State representatives such as B.L. Mitter, proposed to continue the ruler's right and the President's prerogative to be limited to matters from the Provinces. The Drafting Committee revised the draft as a compromise with the representatives of States. About the executive powers of the President, Panikkar was of the view that he should be the *de jure*, nominal head of the executive,



the repository of all such powers and duties as conferred on him by the Constitution. He was also proposed to be the Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces. The responsibility to see that the Constitution was upheld and maintained effectively, also vested with him. These were accepted and approved by the Constituent Assembly.

The Union Constitution Committee had no difficulty proposing provision for two Houses of Parliament. Thus, the Article in final form states that there will be a Parliament for the Union consisting of the President, and two Houses to be known respectively as Council of States and House of the People. There were opponents to this set-up also. Panikkar's opinion was that every unit of the Indian Union should have the authority to send three representatives to the Upper House. They should be elected by the Legislature of the Unit concerned. It is obvious that if this suggestion was accepted, there would have been an inordinate number of representatives at that time, and hence not accepted. About the duration of the Upper House, there was unanimous view that it should be a permanent one, not subject to dissolution. But, on the duration of the Lower House, the Constitution Committee held that it may be for four years. It is strange that most of the people, including Panikkar, wanted it for five years which they proposed in the reply to the questionnaire.

A suggestion made by Panikkar about the determination of "Money Bill" may be stated here. According to him the dispute regarding this matter could be referred to a Committee, consisting of eight members from each House, with the Chief Justice of India as its Chairman. Any reference of this nature could be undertaken if 2/5th members of either House desired such an action. On the face of it, this was a cumbersome process. Panikkar did not press the matter.



In a book published by him six years after the Constitution of the Republic was adopted, Panikkar said that the most striking feature of the Indian document was undoubtedly its acceptance of the fullest form of adult franchise. The social implications of this measure went far beyond its political significance. The right was proclaimed to bring enlightenment and to promote the well-being, the standard of life, the comfort and decent living of the common man. According to Panikkar, the Constitution of India had boldly and unequivocally affirmed the right to legislate in social matters. What is more, it had incorporated as fundamental right, the most far-reaching reform in Hinduism, the abolition of untouchability. A legislating State assured with the full panoply of power had come into existence, proclaiming its right and affirming its duty to set right social injustices by legislative action.

There are certain rights which require positive action by the State and which can be guaranteed only so far as such action is practicable, while others merely require that the State shall abstain from prejudicial action. It was decided to separate them into two classes. One deals with fundamental principles of state policy and the other fundamental rights. The sub-committee on fundamental rights voted to qualify each with the proviso that the exercise of these rights be subject to public order or morality. Several attempts were made, principally by Panikkar, to have the rights divided into two lists; one embodying general rights that would apply to the Union, while the second list, consisting of relatively less consequential rights, would be enforceable only by the Provinces and States. The Sub-committee disagreed with this proposal. Another clause which Panikkar along with others insisted on, was the removal from the list submitted the item providing for secrecy of correspondence and for security of person and dwelling from unreasonable searches and seizures

and from searches without warrant. Panikkar felt that life and liberty should be separated from property rights. In the Rights Sub-committee report, he submitted a minute of dissent. According to him, the Judiciary should be the guardian, the upholder and the champion of rights of the individual. It should not be entrusted with powers restricting the legislative powers of the Union, except to the barest extent possible and solely for the purpose of resisting the encroachments of the State on the liberty of the individual. But so far as property was concerned, it must be subjected to legislation. Panikkar's comment on Article 25, i.e., freedom of conscience and free profession, practice and propagation of religion, in the drafting of which he had a role, is relevant. "It will be noticed that legislation providing for social welfare and reform is specially saved, thereby serving notice on orthodoxy that freedom of religion does not include the right of protection to customs, usages and practices which social conscience of the people has rejected. Another important aspect of this provision is that, for the first time, limits to toleration are defined."

Panikkar was not for including any special provision to ensure Governmental stability. He felt that the future party alignments were likely to be based on economic and political ideologies rather than on sectional, religious and communal lines and elections fought on economic and political ideologies would secure a stable majority to any Party which might be in power. He also was against reservation for minorities. His view was that constitutional amendments should be done with two-thirds majority in each house of Parliament and then ratified by a like majority in the Provincial legislatures.

The Provincial representation in the Upper House at the Centre was to be one member for each million population up to five million and one for each two million population thereafter. The maximum Provincial delegation was to be

twenty. This ratio mechanism was set up by a sub-committee of the Union Constitution Committee. It consisted of Dr. Ambedkar, Gopalaswamy Ayyangar, K.M. Munshi and K.M. Panikkar. The U.C.C. report, however, does not offer any clue for its rejection of equal representation to States. Of the U.C.C. members who answered Rau's questionnaire, only Panikkar favoured equal representation for the unit, on the American model.

According to Panikkar, only a strong central government could deal with the problems of Princely States. In such a situation, he believed, talk of Union versus Provincial powers was a dead issue. "Federation is a fair-weather constitution" and to have one would be definitely dangerous to the strength, prosperity and welfare of India. The Provincial Governments should, according to him, by devolution have large powers, and the basic principle of the Constitution should be a unitary one. In a Federation, all India Centre will not have authority over the Provinces. He has warned that the structure of administrative unity built up in Hindustan will fall to pieces unless the Centre is given an overriding power.

A statement by his Majesty's Government was made on 3 June 1947, on the transfer of power in India. On the same date, the project was explained at a press conference by Lord Mountbatten, in which, over three hundred journalists from India and all over the world were present. The most startling piece of information provided at the conference (the date fixed for transfer, 15 August 1947) was delivered casually, almost like a casual thought, and was not even included in the excerpts telegraphed to London. The British Government desired that power should be transferred, according to the wishes of the Indian people themselves. In accordance with the mandate given to them, the States' representatives would



either join the existing Constituent Assembly or form a new one for themselves.

It is interesting at this juncture to make a reference to what Panikkar wrote in the revised 1945 edition of his book *The Future of South East Asia*, first published in 1943. Under the Chapter, "Problems of India", he examines the Muslim minority question and the suggestions to settle them. According to him, "Since Islamic society, environment and attitude towards life, are different from those of the Hindus, the conception of Indian Muslims as a race or nation, though it may not be ethnically correct, is, from the point view of society, undoubtedly correct. Indian Muslims, though spread all over India and constituting a minority in India taken as a whole, are in a majority in five of the eleven provinces. Thus, while in the provinces they may exercise full political power, in the Centre their numerical inferiority will permanently reduce them, it is apprehended, to a state of impotence. Further, it is feared by them, that whatever be the safeguards incorporated in a Constitution for the protection of the autonomy of the provinces, the encroachment of a powerful Centre, often imperceptible but none-the-less effective, cannot in the long run be resisted ..... The experience of provincial autonomy rightly or wrongly, convinced them that constitutional guarantees will not be sufficient and it is necessary in their interests to create an independent State, Pakistan, out of contiguous areas containing a majority of Muslims."

According to Panikkar's thesis, a Central Government, however constituted, would not be acceptable to the Muslims. If any kind of Federation was possible at all, it could only be one with very attenuated powers. Since, according to him, the Federation was a peace-time constitution, no effective defence would be possible in the future. Federal solution of the Indian problem was impossible and he suggested an alternative: "If



a strong central government is the only alternative, then India has to be differently integrated. Pakistan is not only inevitable, but politically necessary." According to him, the integration of India must come through an organic relationship between two independent States (India and Pakistan), in the relationship between whom there will be no place for constitutional safeguards or majority and minority considerations.

On 7 June 1947, the Union Constitution Committee of the Constituent Assembly met to discuss a centralised Federal Union, under the chairmanship of Jawaharlal Nehru, when Azad, Pant, Jagajivan Ram, Ambedkar, Munshi, S.P. Mukherjee, V.T. Krishnamachari, Panikkar, Panampilly Govinda Menon and others were present. The tentative decision was that Indian Constitution should be federal, with a strong centre; that there should be three exhaustive lists, that residuary powers should vest in the Union government; that Princely States should be on par with the provinces regarding the Federal list, subject to special matters. The next day the Union Constitution Committee and Provincial Constitution Committee met jointly to take a final decision on the proposals. They voted without a dissenting vote and accepted in toto the provisions drawn up by the Union Constitution Committee. The Constituent Assembly also did the same afterwards.

Meanwhile, action was on in England in the process of legislative sanction for the political settlement in India. The report on the 10 July 1947 session of the House of Commons was graphically and sensitively given in the *Manchester Guardian*: "He was a dull member of Parliament who did not feel the very pulse of history breaking in the Commons today. Here was Attlee at the dispatch box, moving the second reading of the Bill that gives — true, a divided India — its complete freedom nearly 200 years after the formation of the East India Company and 173 years after Warren Hastings

became the First Governor General — a freedom conveyed, as both Mr. Attlee and Mr. Macmillan (Conservative Opposition) emphasised, by a voluntary surrender of power, unique in history." The King's assent to the Bill creating India and Pakistan was given at 4.30 P.M. on Friday 18 July 1947.

The Constituent Assembly appointed an ad-hoc committee with a view to advising on the design of the national flag. Panikkar was one of its members. The ad-hoc Committee had two sittings, on 10 and 18 July 1947, where details were finalised.

At the stroke of the midnight hour on 14 August 1947, "when the world was asleep, India awoke to life and freedom, and stepped out of the old to the new, when an age ended and the soul of the nation, long suppressed, found utterance". As to how and why the midnight session was arranged and the part Panikkar had in this decision, is recorded by him in his Autobiography. "The original programme was that Lord Mountbatten would drive in State on the 15th morning at 10 A.M. to the Constituent Assembly and there formally proclaim India's independence. Immediately thereafter, the tricolour was to be hoisted over the building. I felt this was not quite right. According to the British Parliament, British power in India would terminate at midnight on 14 August. My opinion was that we should take over at that exact time. When I suggested this to Sarojini Naidu, she agreed with me that we should proclaim Indian independence at a midnight session but advised me that we could now alter the programme only by a direct approach to Nehru. Although I spoke to some others about this, they took it lightly. In the end I decided to make the direct approach and sent Nehru a short note in the Constituent Assembly; setting out my proposal. He read my note and said: "I like your suggestion, but two of my colleagues go to bed promptly at nine." They

were Patel and Azad. I answered: 'I will take care of that and provide two beds for them at Parliament House' in the same vein. Next day in the Assembly, Nehru called me and said that the Cabinet approved my suggestion and I was invited to the Cabinet Committee to finalise details. The historic mid-night session of the Constituent Assembly came about in this manner."

The fierce, primitive and blind violence and migration of minorities that followed Independence in the Western frontier, prevented Panikkar from leaving his State, Bikaner, for U.N. He was Dewan of the State and managed the affairs in guaranteeing safe passage to the migrants. Panikkar left Bikaner on 17 September for New York, via London. In London he met with V.K. Krishna Menon and discussed matters of relevance concerning his assignment. During Panikkar's absence Dr. Bimal Chandra Roy was deputised for him. When he reached New York, Panikkar was asked to serve on three Committees as India's principal delegate. This helped him to get opportunities for close contact with a number of eminent personalities like Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt, Dr. Lang of Poland, Florence Paton of England and Andrei Vyshinsky. His work on the Committee lasted nearly two months.

Panikkar was deeply interested in the discussion in the U.N. relating to the Zionist claim for partition of Palestine and the establishment of an independent Jewish State. He was introduced to Dr. Chaim Weizmann (1874-1962) as early as 1926. The Indian delegation was in favour of a cantonal federation in which the Jews and Arabs would live together as neighbours. Panikkar met Weizmann in his hotel a number of times to explain to him the stand taken by India on the Palestine issue.

India was named a member of the eleven-member U.N.

Special Committee on Palestine (U.N.S.C.P.) set up to make recommendations on the future of the area, following the withdrawal of British mandate. It failed to come to a unanimous decision. India, along with Iran and Yugoslavia, presented a minority plan providing for a Federal State with local autonomy for Jewish and Arab units and a limitation of Jewish immigration after three years. But the General Assembly passed the majority plan and the State of Israel was established on 14 May 1948. Weizmann was one of the most remarkable men Panikkar met. Panikkar has stated that he felt in Weizman's presence the kind of reverence and humility which he used to feel in the presence of Mahatma Gandhi. "Both had that supreme spiritual quality which communicated itself to those near them."

The historic occasion when Dr. Weizmann appeared to testify before the Political Commission, Panikkar describes as follows: "Slowly the imposing figure of the old Zionist leader, looking very much like an Old Testament Prophet, appeared in the hall supported on both sides by younger men, for it was obvious that the strain was almost too great for him. It was only his iron will that enabled him to appear and plead the cause of his people before the assembled nations of the world. There was dead silence in the hall and when the Chairman called on him to speak, every ear was strained to hear what he had to say. It was difficult for him to read, as his sight was extremely bad; nor was his manner of speaking impressive, as he spoke English haltingly and with a strange accent. And everyone there felt the strange magnetism of his presence and realised that the old man who was addressing them, stood for something which to him was more than all the riches of the world. From the personal point of view also the occasion had elements of high drama. The moment he had waited for during the lifetime of incessant activity, had arrived. To few is it given to see the realisation of their ideals



in their own lifetime. To Chaim Weizmann, it was a moment of triumph and yet he was in no mood of exaltation but humility."

It was when this U.N. Assembly was in session on that the chain of events starting with the accession of Kashmir to the Indian Union started. The leader of the delegation was required to explain the position to George Marshall, the American Secretary of State. Panikkar was with Mrs. Pandit, when they met Loy Henderson, deputed by Marshall. Panikkar prepared a detailed memorandum on Kashmir for distribution to the leaders of the delegations.

Panikkar was a member of the Third Committee (Economic and Social) of the General Assembly, Second Session, representing India. The U.K. representative tabled a resolution to restrict Social Welfare functions of the U.N. to the barest minimum. Panikkar strongly advocated that there should be international assistance for the solution of social and economic questions in economically and socially backward areas. About half the population of the world belonged to this group. To abandon them in a state of backwardness was a danger to all the peoples of the world. Raising the standard of life in underdeveloped areas was a world problem. This should not be left wholly to the initiative of the Government concerned, for, in many cases, they had no technical knowledge or the organisational experience. It is also relevant here to mention that Panikkar came back to the same theme in a series of lectures given by him at the Institute of d'Etude de Developement, Economique et Social of the Sorbonne in 1959. The slightly summarised version of these lectures was published under the title *The Afro-Asian States and Their Problems*.

After completion of the work of the Third Committee,

Panikkar left New York on 17 November 1947 for India. On his way, he spent two days in London, when he was able to gather some information about the clandestine purchase of arms for Hyderabad by the Nizam's son and some other people. In a press conference arranged by V.K. Krishna Menon, Panikkar was able to put across a number of matters regarding the Kashmir issue.

After a short stay in Bikaner on his return, Panikkar went to Delhi to attend the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Constituent Assembly on 12 December 1947. "After the meeting, Nehru asked me very casually to go for a motor drive with him", Panikkar has noted, "I had no idea of what was coming. When we had driven on in silence for about ten minutes, he asked me rather abruptly: 'Are you free to go abroad to take up an Ambassador's post?'

"I replied that my work in Bikaner was coming to an end and as soon as I could free myself from my commitment there, I should be at his disposal for service anywhere.

'When do you think you could get free?' he asked.

'Say, by the 1st of April,' I replied.

'Why not earlier? — as the Maharaja is introducing popular Government in the State?'

"I explained that, apart from having to tie up numerous loose ends in the State, I was anxious to continue my work on the Committee of the Constituent Assembly to which I had been nominated .... When I expressed my desire to be associated with the last stages of our Constitution-making, the Prime Minister laughed: 'It will take more time than you imagine..... I should have liked you to be free earlier, but we can wait till April.' There the conversation ended. It was

characteristic of Nehru that he did not even say where I was to be posted. The next day, Girija Shankar Bajpai, who was Secretary-General of the Ministry of External Affairs, told me that the Prime Minister's intention was to post me to China."

The first thing that Panikkar did when his appointment became certain, was to go to Lucknow in January 1948 to meet Sarojini Naidu, the then Governor of United Provinces. He stayed there for three days and in the end, when he left, she gave him a message for Madame Sun Yatsen and said, "I don't think I shall live to hear from you the stories of Cathy." This premonition came true and Mrs. Naidu passed away soon.

Towards the end of January, Panikkar was called home due to his mother's serious illness. She did not recover from this and passed away about three months later at the age of 73. The news of the assassination of Mahatma Gandhi on 30 January 1948, came through while Panikkar was at Kavalam. On return to Bikaner, he was relieved of his post of Dewan, on 13 March 1948.

## CHINA

**I**NDIA's first Ambassador to China was K.P.S. Menon, an illustrious son of Kerala, a distinguished civil servant and a writer of eminence in English. He was elevated to that post from his position as India's Agent-General in Chungking, China. India was at that time represented in Washington too, by an Agent-General, Girija Shankar Bajpai. According to Menon, it was a tell-tale designation which gave away the fact that India was still a dependency and therefore not in a position to send full-fledged diplomatic representatives with the designation of ambassador or minister. Menon was designated first Ambassador to China in a letter dated 2 January, 1947, by Jawaharlal Nehru, eight months before India became independent. The proudest moment in Menon's life came at 8 a.m. on 15 August 1947, when he, as India's first Ambassador, unfurled the flag of Independent India over our embassy in Nanking.

The head of the Government of China was President Chiang Kai-shek. He had shown a keen desire in the political progress of India, and made a double suggestion in his farewell message on the final day of his visit to India in 1942. He suggested to Great Britain that they give the Indian people real political power as speedily as possible and to the Indian people that they allow nothing to interfere with their wholehearted participation with the worldwide struggle against aggression. As soon as Chiang returned to Chungking, he instructed the Chinese Ambassador in London, Wellington V.K. Koo, to present to the Prime Minister, Churchill, his own views on the critical political and military situation in India, and the urgent need to solve this political problem. On 24 and 25 February, Chiang sent through T.V. Soong in Washington, two confidential messages to President Roosevelt,



also, urging U.S. to advise Britain to seek a reasonable and satisfactory solution to the Indian problem, so as to rally the Indian people to the war against Japan. He noted, in his diary on 12 April 1942: "The British would rather let the Japanese invade India than give political freedom to Indians. It is their belief that once the Allied Victory is won, Britain will continue to rule over India."

India's China connection has a long history. The first time AICC expressed its deep sympathy, was in 1925, (Patna) and subsequent sessions in 1927, 1936, 1937 and 1938 reiterated it in no uncertain terms. The visits of Jawaharlal Nehru (August 1939) and Dr. Radhakrishnan (1944) were the other expressions of this strong link.

By the beginning of February 1947, Communist forces had succeeded in gaining control of almost the whole of Manchuria, except the main cities. Chiang, though initially stated that he did not desire to stand for renomination and election as President, when the National Assembly met on 29 March 1948, stood as a candidate. He won with 2430 against 269 votes on 19 April 1948.

As mentioned before, Panikkar retired from the Prime Ministership (Dewan) of Bikaner on 13/14 March 1948, and became Ambassador attached to the Ministry of External Affairs from that date. He left Calcutta on 13 April 1948 for Nanking. "It is hard to describe my emotions", Panikkar has recorded, "when we boarded our American aircraft. On the one hand, there was the natural elation at representing one's motherland, newly liberated after centuries of foreign domination. On the other, I was not without apprehension about the difficulties ahead, especially the impact on India of the revolution sweeping China. In the balance, I was well pleased with an appointment of such historic importance,

linking, as it did, the world's two most populous countries and oldest civilizations."

Panikkar began his work in Nanking at a time when important politicians and other distinguished people were present in the Capital. This helped him to establish contacts and friendships with persons who mattered most. The first important public function which Panikkar attended in China was the ceremonial installation of Chiang Kai-shek as President for a period of six years.

On 9 June 1948, the Communist radio in the North, announced the integration of areas controlled by them into "North China Liberated Area", which was followed on 1 September with a declaration of a "North China People's Government" as the forerunner of future, People's Government for all China, "set up by an assembly including representatives from workers, farmers, women, liberals and revolutionary army, with provision for representatives of the areas that were to be liberated in the near future". President Chiang was very frank in admitting in his speech to the Kuomintang, that the loss of Mukden and defeat in Manchuria constituted the Government's worst set-back of the Civil War. But he was not willing for a compromise with the Communists, and wanted the country to be prepared for another eight years of war. The Government's efforts at controlling inflation proved of little avail. "The Nanking decade probably saw continued stagnation in the agrarian economy, with no appreciable increase of production. This was followed by a stultifying growth of "bureaucratic Capitalism," that is domination of Industry and Finance by officials and political cliques who feathered their private nests by manipulating government monopolies, finance, development schemes and agencies." Nehru, as early as 7 September 1946, in his broadcast "earnestly hoped that China's present troubles will end soon and a united and

democratic nation will emerge, playing a great part in the furtherance of world peace and progress."

By the middle of 1949, the Indian public opinion was decidedly against the Kuomintang and Nehru saw no chance for the survival of Chiang Kai-shek's rule. "With all my friendship for the Chiangs," he told Mrs. Pandit, "I cannot, as Prime Minister or Foreign Minister, shut my eyes to facts and to my own convictions." He further pointed out: "I am quite convinced that if we stood up for the bankrupt Government in China now, we would be condemned in India and the world, give a fillip to Communism in India, strange as it sounds."

On 14 January 1949, Mao Tse-tung published his eight points, as a precondition for peace negotiations. On 21st, Chiang went into retirement leaving Li Tsung-jen to face the communists. It was officially notified that the Kuomintang Government's headquarters would be moved to Canton at the beginning of February. But due to differences between the acting President Li Tsung-jen and Prime Minister, Dr. Sun Fo, the government machinery moved to Canton; the Legislature, Yuan, remained in Nanking. All the diplomatic missions except that of USSR, decided to shift from the city. Even though the situation was hopeless, the Kuomintang continued their efforts to enlist support of other countries for any possible success. A formal request was made to USSR on 8 January, to act as a mediator; but the attempt did not succeed. Meanwhile, Dr. Sun Fo was replaced as Prime Minister with General Ho Ying-chin. The new Kuomintang negotiating delegation was headed by General Chang Chih-chung; the Communist side was led by Chou En-lai with Gen. Lin Pao, General Yeh Chien-Ying and others as members. The deliberations began at Peking on 5 April.

Panikkar thought it fit to personally brief his Government on the momentous changes that were taking place in China. He left Nanking for Delhi on 1 April. After the briefing, he returned to Shanghai on 20 April and took the evening train to the capital, which proved to be the last Kuomintang train to make the journey.

The Kuomintang debacle had been not only military but also economic, political and moral. Panikkar has given a description of the situation in Nanking on those fateful days. "The civil authorities having fled the town, the mob took charge. They looted systematically the houses of Kuomintang leaders and officials, but otherwise there was no hooliganism. By the afternoon, the Committee of Public Order had gained control and issued various proclamations and orders to the people. Early next morning, every one knew that the advance party of the Communists had entered Nanking and that the main force was being ferried across without any opposition." By the evening, the crossing was completed and the capital effectively occupied. The citizens swarmed to acclaim the People's Liberation Army. Two or three days after the occupation, the old diplomatic community was informed politely but firmly that they would not be given any diplomatic status, but would be treated as distinguished foreigners.

As Mao Tse-tung (1893–1976) declared as early as 1927 that "a revolution is not the same as inviting people to dinner or writing an essay or painting a picture or embroidering a flower; it cannot be anything so refined, so calm and gentle or so mild, kind, courteous, restrained and magnanimous (the virtues of Confucius as described by a disciple); a revolution is an uprising, an act of violence whereby one class overthrows the authority of another. To put it bluntly, it was necessary to bring out a brief reign of terror in every rural area."



The general attitude of the Kuomintang, even during the dark days, towards India while genuinely friendly, was inclined to be a little patronising. According to Panikkar, it was the attitude of an elder brother who was considerably older and well-established in the world, prepared to give his advice to a younger brother struggling to make his way.

On 1 October 1949, in Peking, standing on Tien an Men — the gate of Heavenly Peace — facing south, where — large portrait of Dr. Sun Yatsen was displayed, flanked by the Politburo members of the Central Committee and many an ex-Kuomintang personality, Mao Tse-tung spoke to the delirious and acclaiming millions, milling round the purple walls of the gates of the King Palace, declared: "The Chinese people have stood up, nobody will insult us again." He addressed an estimated crowd of 2,00,000 and said that the war of the people's liberation has been fundamentally won and the reactionary rule of Kuomintang Government has been overthrown. He also announced that a State Administrative Council would be formed with Chou En-lai as Prime Minister and Foreign Minister. The USSR recognised the new Chinese government on 2 October and formally terminated its diplomatic relations with the Kuomintang Government.

The movements of the former diplomats were very restricted. They required special permits and other arrangements for going outside the city limits. Essential items became scarce and things available were costly. Non-receipt of mail was another handicap. Communication with outside world was virtually cut off.

Prime Minister Nehru instructed Panikkar to remain at his post in Nanking at all cost. This enforced idleness was profitably utilised by him for reading and writing. One book, completed during this period, was *Indian Revolution* published later in 1951, under the pseudonym "Chanakya". The book is

of special interest as it reveals how he reacted to the developing situation in China. The Kuomintang, according to Panikkar, stood for Westernisation of China, a democracy on the American model, with large scale capitalism, developing the resources of the country through an industrial system in alliance with the powers of Europe and America. It was an attempt essentially to pattern the societies of Asia on the liberal traditions of 19th-century Europe. Westernisation was in retreat when the Kuomintang armies abandoned the Yangtze line. It also symbolised the eclipse of the maritime conception of Asian politics, which started with Vasco Da Gama's arrival in Calicut. The sea power was in full retreat and the vacuum so created was filled by the continental tradition.

A project which he had planned several years earlier, also was taken up during this time by Panikkar. Though the genesis of the idea of the book was in 1925, when Panikkar visited Belam in Portugal, it was forced to lie dormant for a long period of gestation. In addition to various other sources, the library of the British Embassy in Peking and the records of the University of Peita proved of exceptional value for gathering many a relevant material for the book. Thus *Asia and Western Dominance* was completed, during a period of six months of strenuous effort.

A product of Panikkar's keen interest in Chinese literature was a collection of 12 short stories rendered into English by Huang K'un and published at Delhi. It included Shen Ying-ping, the then Minister of Culture of the Peoples Republic of China, who was chiefly known as a novelist, and Tin Ling, most famous of the Communist women writers of the time. The book has an appendix on modern Chinese literary movements. It noted that "optimism is characteristic of new Chinese writing, as a gloomy pessimism was that of its

immediate past. To understand what the proletarian writers of the present generation in China have to say, it is necessary to refer to those of her immediate past. On the whole, the book is comprehensive enough to present a *night and day* in the experience of Chinese literature."

The Chinese play published in English under the title, *Western Room*, was rendered into Malayalam by Panikkar. This was done just before he left Delhi for Cairo on his new assignment. The manuscript was prepared while he was staying in isolation at Nanking, and was titled — *Padinjare Muri*.

The poems Panikkar wrote in Malayalam during his stay in China were published in a collection in 1954. Specially relevant is the poem on *Yenan*, expressing his sentiments during his visit to the famous caves where Mao Tse-tung stayed. A translation of this poem in Chinese was published in an important magazine in Peking. The poems on Sun Yatsen memorial, the fall of Nanking and Chinese freedom, have in them echoes of the great events of the times.

A translation into Malayalam of a Chinese classic of the 4th century A.D., based on the English rendering by Arthur Waby was published by Panikkar with an Introduction by Vallathol Narayana Menon, under the title *Ina Pakshikal*.

Another book, again a translation from Sanskrit to Malayalam, was completed during this time by Panikkar, a free rendering of Kalidasa's *Kumara Sambhavam*. It was published with an appreciative Foreword by Eminent Sanskrit Scholar of Kerala, Attoor Krishna Pisharodi.

At the time of Panikkar's arrival in China to assume his responsibilities as Ambassador in May 1948, the situation was on the whole not unfavourable to the Kuomintang. The head of the government, Chiang Kai-shek "was not only a



*pillar* against fascism but against communism also. The only fly in the ointment was the existence of a militant Communist Party in the North-west corner of China, under the leadership of Mao Tse-tung. In 1944, it was no more than a fly or at worst a wasp. No one thought, in five years it would show itself as an eagle and drive out the Kuomintang and sit on the Imperial Throne as firmly as any son of Heaven had ever done".

Jawaharlal Nehru desired that so long as the Kuomintang flag flew on the mainland, India should not recognise the new Government. But if Chiang left the mainland and shifted to Taiwan or some other place, then the matter might be taken up. After the Communists crossed the Yangtze and took Nanking, secret diplomatic chords got activated between Delhi and other friendly capitals, including London and Washington. Delhi impressed upon friendly countries that the new Communist Government was strong, stable, and exercised effective control over the whole continent of China. About the process that was taking place on the matter of recognition the government was in continuous consultation with the ambassadors in New Delhi, as well as their respective countries and were acting in concert with most of them. There was no feeling among them that India was acting independently. In an interview, V.K. Krishna Menon has stated: "We wanted Britain to recognise (New China) first, because they had told us that they would do so. Later, Great Britain told me that it would be good if we both did it simultaneously. Burma had already recognised China because she found we were taking time over it. The recognition of China was an act of political maturity: not to do so would be just closing your eyes to a stubborn reality". As indicated in the beginning of this para, Panikkar has recorded, in consideration of Nehru's views, that "recognition was bound to take time as the Kuomintang was still in occupation not



only of Canton but vast areas in the South-East, and the Civil War was unlikely to end on the mainland for another two or three months". In the circumstances, the possibility of immediate recognition was out of question. Krishna Menon also has indicated that Panikkar did not play any role in the discussion leading to the decision to recognise the new regime. Menon further credits himself with having suggested that Panikkar go as Ambassador to the new Republic.

After assumption of power as Prime Minister and Foreign Minister, Chou En-lai summoned the representatives of foreign countries who were there, treated as "distinguished foreigners", to hand over invitation to their governments to establish fresh diplomatic arrangements with the Peoples Republic. The new government was accorded recognition by the U.S.S.R. on 2 October which was followed by East European States. The official communique giving the decision of Government of India recognising the new Republic was issued on 30 December, 1949, almost three months after the Republic was proclaimed.' Another three months had to pass before the diplomatic relations were formalised between the two countries. Meanwhile, in October, the Chinese authorities formally allowed the "distinguished foreigners" to leave, if they so desired. Since no useful purpose was served by his presence in Nanking without diplomatic status, Panikkar preferred to leave along with most of the European and Asian representatives, by British ships.

It will be interesting at this juncture to recall some authentic pronouncements about what the leaders and individuals in key positions in China felt on India's position and assessed its leadership. The utterances, articles and other expressions of views, did not reveal any admiration or even understanding of the Indian position. China had only contempt for India at that time, and grouped her with

countries considered as agents of Western imperialism. Chairman of the Peoples Republic, Mao Tse-tung, on 19 October 1949, in his greeting to the Communist Party of India, said: "I firmly believe that relying on the brave Communist Party of India and patriots, India will not certainly remain long under the yoke of imperialism and its collaborators. Like free China, free India will one day emerge in the Socialist and People's Democratic family; that day will end the imperialist reactionary era in the history of mankind. Indian Communist Party was once described by Jawaharlal Nehru as "the stupidest of Communist Parties of the World." Just two days after India officially recognised Peoples Republic of China as *de jure* and *de facto* Government, on the New Year message on 1 January 1950, China declared in no uncertain terms that one of the solemn tasks of the Peoples Liberation Army will be to liberate Tibet and safeguard Chinese frontiers. Then, on the day (13 May 1950) Panikkar, the Ambassador-designate of India, arrived on Tientsin, on his way to Peking to assume his new Ambassadorial responsibility, a broadcast over Peking radio said: "The American Government and the *reactionary* clique of the Indian government are now conspiring an imperialistic expansion into a territory under the authority of the Chinese Government, namely the province of Tibet." We should remember that this was six months after India recognised the Peoples Republic! All these and similar facts which are legion, clearly showed the unambiguous attitude of the new rulers towards India.

Since the authorities of the Peoples Republic desired that diplomatic relations should be settled through negotiations, A.K. Sen who was India's Consul-General in Shanghai, was authorised to conduct them on behalf of the Indian Government. The initial problems in this regard were overcome and Sen was accepted as Charge d' Affaires for this purpose. During this period when Panikkar was in India, his

name was proposed for the Ambassador's post in New China. While these formalities were on, there also arose a proposal to post Panikkar as High Commissioner of India in Pakistan. But formal acceptance of his nomination was intimated by the Chinese Government and the new proposal was dropped. He left India for China to take up the responsibilities by the end of April 1950. He has recorded his feeling when the boat *Poyang*, carrying him entered Taku bar in Tientsin on 13 May: "All my training has been in the liberal radicalism of the West and consequently, though I was in some measure familiar with the economic doctrines of Marx, I had no sympathy for a political system in which individual liberty did not find a prominent place. But as against all this, I had a deep feeling of sympathy for the Chinese people, a desire to see them united, strong and powerful, able to stand up against the nations which had oppressed them for a hundred years, a psychological appreciation of their desire to wipe out the humiliations which followed the Western domination of their country and to proclaim the message of Asia resurgent." He was received by A.K. Sen, the Vice-Mayor of Tientsin, and the Chief of Protocol and stayed there for the day. They left by train for Peking next morning, where the party was officially welcomed by the Chinese authorities and the diplomatic corps.

Peking was not the same which he visited last in September 1948 with the facilities arranged by the Kuomintang Government. The hotel in which he was put up now, was taken over by the new Government from the British. It was now set apart for foreign missions till they were provided with permanent accommodation. The residence arranged for Panikkar faced the city wall outside the legation area, with a beautiful garden, which was in keeping with the atmosphere of the city. Three days after his arrival, Panikkar was received by Chou En-lai at the Foreign Office — *Wai Chiaopu*.

The formal presentation of credentials to the Chairman Mao Tse-tung took place at 5 P.M. on 20 May 1950, at the Chairman's Official Residence, one of the smaller palaces of Manchu Emperors. On that occasion, Ambassador Panikkar said: "The Peoples Republic of China and the Republic of India representing the oldest communities in the world, are now in a position to co-operate effectively for mutual advantage and for the welfare of their peoples. The two sister republics of Asia, which between them contain over a third of the world's population, can through their co-operation become a great and invincible force." After the formal ceremony, Mao Tse-tung and Panikkar talked for about half an hour, which he has recorded in his book, *In Two Chinas*.

Thus, Panikkar embarked upon the delicate task of a momentous diplomatic effort in a country which itself was in the process of a second genesis. He was sure that every effort would be made to probe deep into matters and events that shaped their policies as projected on the political scene. The first thing he did was to establish contact and friendship with persons who mattered most. He met Chu-Teh, who with Mao, built up the Peoples Liberation Army. Chu-Teh was the son of a poor farmer, who grew up and evolved as the hero of the Red Army. The others were Lin Shao-Chi, a theoretician, Li Chishen, Chung Lan — all Vice-Chairmen, Kuo Mo-jo, Huang Wei-pai, Shen Ying-ping — Vice-Premiers and a number of other interesting personalities. The first impression Panikkar gained was that the new leadership was in the hands of men and women who were efficient and honest, who knew their minds and were prepared to put their best into the service of the State.

Clement Rezzonico, a diplomat located in Peking at that time, has left his impression about Panikkar: "He was bent on keeping his information up to date, in finding for it the proper



place in the wider field of the world situation as he saw it, weighing the pros and cons in a constant attempt to understand. Understanding it, is one of the things of which the world today is in dire need. Understanding, moreover, cannot run on a one way road if it is to serve. The securing of a wider knowledge and understanding of his country was one of the aims to which Sardar Panikkar devoted himself with competence. During this period Independent India's China policy seems to flow through two channels, overt and covert. If on the overt plane India displayed extraordinary enthusiasm and patience to befriend Communist China with definite goals, she consistently and covertly reexamined, reassessed and regrouped her strategy toward China in tune with her internal and external needs.

A testing time for Panikkar's diplomatic skills presented itself when the developments in Korea took a turn for the worse. At the end of World War II, the Japanese soldiers in the north of 38th parallel surrendered to the Russians and those south of it to the Americans. In effect, the line became virtually an Iron Curtain separating one people into two, nine million in the North and twenty-one in the South. The armies of the South and the North, in the early part of June 1950, sat entrenched looking at each other, on either side of the 38th parallel, till the dawn of Sunday 25th, when the cold war developed into a hot one.

According to Panikkar, in the beginning, United Nations intervention in Korea caused no particular reaction in China. But the take-over of Taiwan under the protection of the American Seventh Fleet was not viewed lightly. By the middle of July, he noticed a clear change in Chinese attitude and there was evidence of planned campaign to bring home to the public what the Communists considered to be the character of American intervention in Asia. By 28 September, the U.N.

troops had recaptured Seol and on 30th Chou En-lai broadcast a warning that Peking would not "supinely tolerate" seeing their neighbours being savagely invaded by the "Imperialists". He also made it clear that if Mac Arthur swept into North Korea, Chinese troops will not stand aside.

Panikkar had a most important mid-night meeting with Premier Chou En-lai on 20 October 1950, when he (Chou En-lai) convincingly conveyed that, if the Americans crossed the 38th parallel, China would be forced to intervene in Korea. For him, the South Koreans did not matter but American intrusion into North Korea would encounter Chinese resistance. Panikkar sent a telegram to New Delhi conveying the message the same night. This was relayed to Washington through New Delhi. In those intolerant years, the American Government regarded Indian neutralism with suspicion, and concluded that Chou's message as probably "a bald attempt to blackmail the U.N. by threats of intervention in Korea". Some of the State Department officials took Chou En-lai's warning very seriously; others thought it was a bluff. Acheson, declining to regard the message as an authoritative statement of Chinese policy, although not a matter to be disregarded either, sent the dispatch to President Truman at noon. Like many other officials in Washington, the President was inclined to discount it because of distrust of Panikkar. He recalled that the Indian Ambassador "had in the past played the game of Chinese Communists fairly regularly, so that this statement could not be taken as that of an impartial observer."

After this episode, most of the Western diplomats often referred to Panikkar as "Panicky Ambassador". Except for the early warning, Panikkar's role in the settlement of the Korean conflict and related topics is not substantial. But his initiative and skill were utilised by Britain, Canada and others for relevant steps. The diplomatic moves on a new Conference on

Korea without "anything tacked to it", communicated by Nehru to Panikkar for China's views was finally accepted by the Chinese. But this was sabotaged by the Americans as they were bent upon pushing through the resolution branding China as aggressor in Korea. This was the first major attempt by India to bring about a settlement of conflict in that part of the world.

The tragic fact is that no one won the Korean war. As Panikkar himself has written, the intervention of China, which upset the American plans and discredited the bellicose Mac Arthur, came in time to reestablish Panikkar's credibility. As Prof. Brecher has stated, "as the first ambassador to Peking (1950-52) and the only non-communist diplomat on friendly personal relations with Chinese leaders, Panikkar laid the foundations for cordiality and trust between these two great Asian powers. His dispatches throughout the Korean war and his role as liaison between Communist China and the outside world, won Nehru's admiration and contributed to India's growing prestige as a mediator." "It was as much due to his remarkable ability," as noted by a reputed editor, "as to his extraordinary adaptability that the new Communist rulers of China, found Panikkar (Panichar to them) as acceptable as did the Pro-American dictator, Marshal Chiang Kai-shek. A typical instance that speaks volumes for the adaptability of Panikkar, is narrated by T.N. Kaul, who joined him in China as Counsellor: "When Panikkar was leaving Peking in 1952 to take up his post as India's Ambassador to Cairo, I went to see him off at Tienstein. He seemed already in the court of King Farooq and Queen Nariman. He bought an old diamond watch fixed to a fan of ostrich feathers which he proudly showed me — "for presentation to Queen Nariman." He had paid about two million JMP (or Rs. 1000/- at the rate of exchange) for it. But before he reached Cairo, the King and

Queen had been overthrown. That was Panikkar — he would fit in any society—modern, medieval or ancient.

As early as 1 January 1950, Peking declared its intention to liberate Tibet. In the *aide memoire* dated 26 August 1950, the use of the word, "Sovereignty" in "autonomy within the frame-work of Chinese-sovereignty" created much embarrassment to the Government of India. No amount of subsequent clarifications or explanations did satisfy or settle the issues and controversies kicked up by it. The responsibility for the use of the word (*Sovereignty* instead of *Suzerainty*) in the document is still not fixed or exactly known. There are a number of people who consider Panikkar responsible for it. About this question, V.K. Krishna Menon's reaction is indicated by Prof. Brecher: "We have always accepted that Tibet was part of China. We have never accepted this buffer State position. We have always looked upon the attempt by British to make Tibet into a no man's land as an imperialistic device. Even after that invasion (of Tibet in 1950) we had said that we did not regret it; (India's policy) you can see that for yourself in the Prime Minister's speeches. There is no historical background for Tibet's independence". Then Menon continued:

"My impression of Panikkar at that time was that he was doing a good job of work. Later, I discovered that he used some words which became the subject of controversy. He has a sound basic grounding and his experience is varied. He is very attractive; he has read a lot and can write a history book in half an hour, which I could not write in six years. I think he tried to provide a historical justification for our decision which was really not required."

Sir Girija Shankar Bajpai, the Secretary-General, was the first to draw Nehru's attention to this egregious blunder and to its dangerous implications in respect of India's 2000-mile



long northern frontier with Tibet. Kaul has stated that "Panikkar was livid and drafted a strong reply to Delhi. He showed it to me. (i.e. T.N. Kaul) and I softened it a bit and suggested he address it to the Prime Minister. He agreed and set it off giving reasons why such communications should not be sent. Prime Minister agreed with him." Kaul goes on with his own assessment as follows: "Many in India have criticised Panikkar's handling of this matter. I have no doubt in my mind that Panikkar's action was right on moral, political and strategic considerations and in the short and long-term interests of India ..... It would not only have looked ridiculous but meaningless and make no difference whatsoever in the actual situation on the ground. It would only have further aggravated Sino-Indian relations and increased China's suspicions.

A Tibetan delegation after prolonged negotiations signed an agreement with China on 23 May 1951. The agreement with seventeen articles was a compromise and the Tibetan delegation signed it yielding to the threat of further military action. The Chinese forged the official seal of the Dalai Lama to affix it.

It will be relevant to point out some facts concerning the Asian Relations Conference held in New Delhi from 28 March to 2 April 1947, relating to the representation of Tibet. The Chinese (at that time the Kuomintang was in power) in February officially protested at the invitation to Tibet. It had figured as an independent country on the map of Asia which had served as a backdrop to the platform of the conference. But the map was removed when an observer from the Chinese (Kuomintang) Foreign Ministry protested to Nehru, against showing Tibet as a political entity separate from China.

Panikkar has recorded that Chou En-lai recognised the legitimacy of our trade and cultural interests in Tibet and

suggested that the political agency at Lhasa, an office of dubious legality, should be regularised by its transformation into an Indian Consulate-General in exchange for a similar Chinese Office in Bombay. The main issue of Indian representation at Lhasa was, according to Panikkar, satisfactorily settled.

President Rajendra Prasad was not happy with the way our policy towards China was conducted. India's diplomatic approach, according to the Rashtrapati, was riddled with weakness and proneness to wishful thinking. He was greatly upset at the Indian Government's impassivity when Tibet was occupied by the Chinese Reds. His word of caution to Nehru had fallen on deaf ears. The Prime Minister had been misled by his Ambassador in Peking, Panikkar. With his eyes moistened, Prasad observed to the author Durga Das: "I hope I am not seeing ghosts and phantoms; but I see the murder of Tibet recoiling on India."

Many important people believed that Panikkar took the line that would please his master, Nehru, in matters of foreign policy. According to D.P. Misra, he was more a representative of Nehru than of India's. "Panikkar had been the Dewan of the Princely State of Bikaner and from the way he deferred to Nehru's views in all matters, it appeared as if he had replaced one Maharaja by another. Masani, a strong anti-communist, who had known Panikkar since his student days in London, has asserted that Panikkar was not a communist but a cynic and a great believer in 'real politik'. Girija Shankar Bajpai, Secretary-General in the Ministry of External Affairs, was frank and told T.N. Kaul when he called on him before his departure in September 1950 to assume charge of his post as Counsellor, that one reason for sending him to Peking was "to keep an eye on Panikkar who was inclined to take too pro-Chinese a view." According to Dr. P. Subbarayan, a long-time

friend of Panikkar, "He was able to bring his knowledge of Asian history into use to make friendship possible between India and China. Many people accused him of being a communist which is not in accordance with facts. What Sardar Panikkar was interested in, was the friendship between two Asian countries which might save peace for the world." To the well-known author, Taya Zinkin, Panikkar brings to politics a highly-trained mind, a mind not only alert as quick silver, but deeply historical; this is what makes him so fascinating, so effective and so absorbent, in a world where most Ambassadors are messenger boys or glorified trade commissioners. The eminent American Columnist, Sulzberger, who met Panikkar in April at Delhi, had recorded this reaction: "He is an extremely intelligent man with an active mind. I had met him some years previously in U.S. but he has now grown a beard which appeared to be deliberately modelled on that of Lenin and has given him rather a resemblance to that Russian leader. He was distressed by American policy in Asia and by the manner in which it is presented, which offends Asiatic peoples. He said: 'No country in Asia will accept to be bossed by America and any hint of such a desire by USA causes immediate suspicion and hostility.' He said nations of Europe understand US better and realised that we were not trying to dominate. But they were nations with older traditions of independence and therefore more self-confident. The people of Asia have just been finding their freedom and are extremely sensitive about it. C. Rajagopalachari in a letter to Nehru was very plain: "May God help us and save India from drifting to be just a satellite of China. I feel hurt when even Panikkar tells us with extreme satisfaction that China is very friendly to us and has no territorial ambitions. About this period and the influence Panikkar and Menon were supposed to have had over Nehru, Reid has commented in his book: "He (Reid) had been warned that the influence of Krishna Menon and Panikkar on



Prime Minister Nehru was so great that, it was worse than useless to criticise them adversely in any way, when speaking to Nehru. The current phrase was "the Prime Minister has a infatuation for Krishna Menon and an admiration for Panikkar."

A perceptive account of the first Indian Republic Day Celebration held at Peking on 26 January 1951, arranged by the Indian Embassy, is given by Kaul in his book. Chairman Mao and other dignitaries were present on the occasion. It was, indeed, an unforgettable event for all concerned. "Chairman Mao, a tall, loose-limbed figure, entered the hall with a brown wollen overcoat, draped loosely over his shoulders, reaching almost his ankles, and a peak cap. Security guards removed the coat from his shoulders and he walked into the hall like a patriarch, smiling but not in the least self-conscious. The audience rose in his honour. Everyone stood still while the Chinese and the Indian national anthems were played. Mao took his seat at the head of the table on the right of Panikkar. Paranjpe, our able Chinese language expert and Pu, Mao's Columbia-educated English interpreter, stood behind. All eyes were fixed on Mao, who rarely attended national day receptions. This was a signal honour shown to India in view of our improving relations... Chairman Mao stood up to say a few words. He had a slight stoop round his shoulders, his small eyes shone in his moon face and his smile (not grin) lit up his whole personality. He spoke not like an orator or a demagogue, but in short simple sentences. His speech was translated into English by Pu. Then Panikkar got up beaming like a beaver and replied also in short simple sentences, unlike his usual style. He seemed to have been influenced by Mao's example. He spoke in English and his speech was translated into excellent Chinese by Paranjpe. Chou En-lai, who sat near me said — "Paranjpe's Chinese is better than any foreigner's I have heard". This was great compliment and well-deserved too. I was coaxed by



Panikkar to translate his speech into Russian for the benefit of Ambassadors from the Socialist Camp. It was a great day for India. The ice between the two was melting."

After dinner, at which Mao proposed the main toast, Panikkar had a short discussion with him. The chairman evinced interest in matters relating to exchange of students and professors between the two countries, learning each other's languages, etc. The impression left on Panikkar by Mao was that of a person with a deep sense of human kindness and fellow feeling.

A profound effect was created in India when, early in 1951, China offered one million tons of food grains to India in exchange of a wide variety of commodities. The grain deal, which Panikkar negotiated on behalf of his country to tide over the difficult situation, gave rise to much speculation in the West and a number of incorrect reports were circulated by anti-communist media. The general impression created earlier was that China was facing extreme famine conditions due to poor harvests caused by the rigorous measures of land reforms. These were proved to be false when grain began to arrive in India.

The first unofficial goodwill delegation to visit China came in May with Pandit Sunderlal as its leader. The May Day celebrations took place in Peking in the immediate presence of Chairman Mao. The delegation also witnessed this impressive extravaganza.

The first contacts between Viet Minh and India were also initiated during this period. For Panikkar, this started with meeting Hoang, the leader of the Vietnam delegation in Peking. One thing was evident; the war in Vietnam was slowly but surely eating into the vitals of the French imperialist establishment.

When permission was granted by the Chinese Government to Panikkar's extensive tour in the interior of China, he got the chance to visit ancient centres of cultural and historical significance. His party consisted of his wife, daughter and Dr. Virendra Kumar, Chinese-speaking secretary, and a photographer. The Chinese Government sent an English-knowing officer, Lang Shin-kang with them. The first place they visited was Sian, which according to Panikkar, was the epitome of Chinese history. The party was entertained to a banquet in Lanchow by the Governor, when Panikkar was treated to a dish of python meat! About this experience, he has written: "At first I did not know what it was, but my daughter who understood some Chinese, was able to make out from the conversation of our Chinese friends that it was the meat of a snake! On this, I asked the Governor what it was, adding of course, how delicious it tasted! The Governor was very pleased that I expressed my appreciation of the dish, for he said it was python which could only be had in Szechuan! It tasted like the white meat of chicken; and whatever disinclination I might have felt to the taste of snake's flesh, I was careful not to show it and ate it as if I considered it something which I had long been waiting for." Panikkar has published a delightful travelogue in Malayalam giving his experiences in this travel through interior China.

Mrs. Panikkar became seriously ill, with the advent of winter in China, to the extent of causing anxiety. Experts advised Panikkar to move her to a warmer climate. The Russian specialists also gave the much-needed medical assistance to her. Panikkar approached Nehru to post him to Egypt, which place on all counts, was supposed to help his wife's recovery. This was agreed to and Panikkar was expected to relinquish his responsibilities in China before the end of 1952. But circumstances resulting from some delicate

diplomatic activity necessitated his presence in China for some more months. This was to bring to a close some of the major matters concerning Korean peace efforts.

Panikkar's literary productions during periods of comparative calm, were not much. His magnum opus, *Asia and Western Dominance*, was undertaken in earnest, during delicate diplomatic efforts on Korea. Kaul has written that "Panikkar worked like a student preparing for a competitive examination and wrote his notes for his *Asia and Western Dominance* every morning. When he had finished one chapter, he would drop in at the Chancery for an hour or so. I tried to persuade him to spend a little more time in the office by furnishing his room as lavishly as possible in those days; but he stuck to his habit of not spending more than an hour there daily and left office matters entirely to me."

Kaul has mentioned a mischievous pleasure of Panikkar: "He would call me almost every afternoon or evening for a chat, over a cup of tea or drink, and exchange his impressions and ideas with me. We talked about Cold War, America, USSR, India and China mainly. He would tell me with a twinkle in his eyes how he had hoodwinked some of the Western representatives. They used to flock to him every time he met Chou En-lai or other Chinese leaders, to get some crumbs of information to send to their foreign offices. Panikkar took an almost mischievous delight in sending them off the trail. Some of them tried to doublecheck with me, and when I told them the truth, they would naturally believe my Ambassador rather than me! I told him about it and suggested that he should not mislead them. He laughed and said, they are a bunch of fools and he had utter contempt for them! The result was that they thought that I was a communist and Panikkar a liberal and reported this to their Governments, as I came to know later!"

The general in-depth impression Panikkar had of the New China was one of a tremendous upheaval which has transformed what was a highly civilized but unorganised mass of people into a great modern State. "It has released great energies, given the Chinese people a new hope and a new vision of things. It has brought forth great enthusiasm and an irresistible desire to move forward, but the means employed to achieve these very desirable ends are in many cases of a kind which revolts the free mind. Compared to the State, the individual has lost all value and this is the strange thing in China which adds a tinge of sorrow even when one appreciates and admires what the revolution has done for China and Asia generally."

Panikkar was permitted to relinquish his post of the Good Will Mission after the return home. Thus, after "a profoundly interesting experience full of drama, to witness alike the end of an epoch and the beginning of another, the tragic end of the hopes of a great movement with the inevitable concomitants of national chaos, personal tragedies, sordid betrayals and confusion all around and the enthusiastic beginning of a new period, hailed as the dawn of a great era, with new ambitions great hopes and wide-spread sense of optimism," Panikkar left China at the end of his mission.

Perhaps no other Indian diplomat has been so severely criticised by so many people in India and abroad as Panikkar was. His service in two Chinas (1948-1952) and acts of commission and omission attributed to him, have kicked up controversies as no others, at any other period of India's diplomatic history. As the vital documents and records are still not open, it is hard to pronounce a final verdict. Still, the best assessment of Panikkar has come from Alan Campbell Johnson: "The more I see of Panikkar, the more impressed I am by his intellectual power and political shrewdness. He is



the rare blend of scholar and a man of affairs who can bring his profound knowledge of history to the service of contemporary events. He is one of about half a dozen men, who may well have great influence in the shaping of Indian policy at home and abroad." About Panikkar's critics, he has remarked: "He has his enemies and there are some who assert that he is ambitious and untrustworthy, but I suspect, he suffers from the jealousy of those who resent being confronted with superior intellect. It is the occupational risk of very clever men to be regarded as dangerous by their less gifted brethren."

## CAIRO

**A**N event that gave Panikkar immense happiness, while he was in Delhi on his return from China, was a special Convocation arranged by the University of Delhi to confer on him an honorary degree of Doctor of Letters. This was in recognition of his contributions in the fields of history and literature. The President of India, Dr. Rajendra Prasad, presided over the Convocation.

Panikkar spent six weeks in Delhi while his next assignment was being formally announced. During this time, he was invited to lecture at the Delhi School of Economics on various aspects of diplomacy. The three speeches he made, were later published in a book — *The Principles and Practice of Diplomacy*.

On 2 September 1952, the Government of India announced the appointment of K.M. Panikkar as Ambassador of India to Egypt. His credentials were to be presented to King Ahmed Faud II, King of Egypt and the Sudan. This was agreed to as the Government noted that the Egyptian Government was engaged in friendly negotiations with representatives of Sudan, in order to find a solution of the problem of its (Sudan) future relations with Egypt. The statements of Egyptian leaders of all parties showed general acceptance of the principle that Sudan's political future has to be determined by the Sudanese themselves. It was made clear by India, that recognition of the title (*King of Egypt and the Sudan*) in no way prejudiced the political issue. But a fortnight before Panikkar's arrival in Cairo, the king was deposed and the Revolutionary Council took over power, with General Neguib as President, and a cabinet consisting of Ali Meher Pasha as Prime Minister.

In the Indian embassy V.M.M. Nair was *Charge d' Affaires*, with Venketeswaran as Second Secretary. Nair later served as Ambassador in several other capitals. Venketeswaran, with a special talent for languages, was according to Panikkar, one of the promising men in the Ministry of External Affairs.

In the beginning of July 1952, Prime Minister Hussein Sirry Pasha advised King Farouk to accept General Neguib as Minister of Defence, which was refused. Instead, the King ordered the dissolution of the Free Officers Executive Committee, of which Lt. Col. Gamal Abd al Nasser was the Chairman. The Prime Minister resigned on 20th July and his place was taken by Neguib Hilaly on 22nd, who obliged the King's brother-in-law, Ismail Sherin Bey, as Defence Minister. This was the signal for the Officers' coup. The coup was an affair exclusively organised by eleven Officers, relatively unknown outside the military establishment. The swift and bloodless take-over ended over two millennia of foreign rule and brought to power a truly Egyptian elite. The ease with which the traditional power structure was brought down, manifested the organising skill of Abd al Nasser and the weakness of the regime.

Panikkar presented his credentials to the Regency Council. He had special responsibilities as the concurrently accredited Ambassador to Syria, Jordan, Lebanon and Libya. Pakistan was actively cultivating those Muslim countries which affected adversely Indian interests. Their emphasis was on projecting India as a land hostile to Muslims in general. In order to counter the threat of being completely isolated from the Islamic world, India opposed the mixing of religion with politics; publicised its secular-state doctrine and deplored international ties based on religion alone. But, at the same time, it tried to project the image of India as having the third

most populous Muslim Community, thereby counting on the favour of traditional Islamic leaders.

Panikkar took the earliest opportunity to visit the countries to which he was accredited, to present his credentials and to establish personal contacts with leaders and others. Through his Arab Secretary, Sayed, he was able to establish contact with the Grand Mufti, Al Amin Husseini, who held the titular position as President of Arab Palestine. This greatly helped to build friendship between India and Palestine Arabs. Panikkar visited centres of historic, religious and cultural importance in Palestine.

A very useful and purposeful establishment — the Indo-Egyptian Foundation — was organised during the tenure of Panikkar as Ambassador to Egypt. The Chief objective was to bring together scholars, linguists and others of these two ancient lands, to exchange ideas concerning the present-day cultural situation in each country. It gained the support of leaders like General Neguib. Panikkar was one of its Fellow Chairmen. The first publication sponsored by it was a translation of *Mahabharatha* into Arabic by the dedicated linguist-scholar-poet of eminence, Wadis el Boustani. It was a monumental work, a product of forty years of sincere effort. The book was formally released by General Neguib with his handing over a copy to Panikkar at a special function in Cairo.

A number of distinguished people visited Cairo when Panikkar was there. Ten days after his assumption of charge, Dr. Radhakrishnan, Vice-President, on his way to Europe, came as State guest. He called on General Neguib before his departure. The parting words of the Philosopher-Vice-President to the General, as recorded by Panikkar, were "Remember one thing, General! Today you and your associates are men of integrity and restraint. But you are all powerful. Power is



intoxicating. If you see that it does not go to your heads, it will be to your country's and your own good. Otherwise both will suffer."

The great Gandhian thinker and eminent Sanskrit scholar, Kaka Kalelkar, on a lecture mission to African countries, halted at Cairo. He was invited to be Panikkar's guest and stayed with him for about fifteen days. They got a lot of time together to discuss aspects of Sanskrit classics and their rich contribution to Indian languages in general. The merits and shortcomings of Hindu culture and the changes that are required to rectify inadequacies, etc., came up in their talks.

On his way home after the Commonwealth Conference in London, Nehru spent three days at Cairo, as the guest of the Egyptian Government. General Neguib, along with Nasser and others of the Revolutionary Council, had long discussions for about four hours. The meeting was a significant one, as both sides got the opportunity to understand the ideals and aspirations they were pursuing. Nasser has recorded in his memoirs that it helped him to shape his ideas and policies.

There is an interesting note recorded by Mathai about the impression the Prime Minister had about Panikkar. "Nehru had noticed, more than once, the sloppy way Panikkar dressed. His collar and sleeves were often soiled. In Cairo, Nehru noticed at the Embassy, the sofas were discoloured by oil from Panikkar's head". Another comment by Nehru, noted by Mathai, is as follows: "One morning (while in London, staying with Vijayalakshmi Pandit, then High Commissioner), we were having breakfast. Vijayalakshmi and Indira left the table early, to attend to something. Nehru suddenly remembered Panikkar. He told me that Panikkar reminded him of the chief of an African tribe of very tall people, who went about nude! The Chief happened to see an

English top hat and fell in love with it. He ordered half a dozen and carefully stored them. On an important tribal occasion, the Chief arrived ceremoniously with the top hat on, but with nothing else". It may be relevant here to mention what Lord Travelyan, wrote in his memoirs: "Nehru made it plain to Sri G.S. Bajpai that he had confidence in only three of his diplomats, namely, Krishna Menon, K.M. Panikkar and Dr. Radhakrishnan and none others'."

## STATES REORGANISATION COMMISSION

**J**AWAHARLAL Nehru, the Prime Minister, made a statement in the Lok Sabha, on the appointment of a Commission for the Reorganisation of States of India. On that occasion, he said that "greater development of political consciousness among people and the growing importance of great regional languages, led gradually to demands for the formation of certain States on a linguistic basis. The language and culture of an area have undoubted importance, as they represent the pattern of living which is common in that area. In considering the reorganisation of States, however, there are other important facts which have also to be borne in mind. The first essential consideration is the preservation and strengthening of the unity and security of India. Financial, economic and administrative considerations are almost equally important, not only from the point of view of each State but of the whole nation".

About the responsibilities entrusted to the Commission, he said that "they will be free to investigate the conditions of the problem, the historical background, the existing situation and the bearing of all important and relevant factors thereon. The Commission will be free to consider any proposal relating to such reorganisation. They will be at liberty to devise their own procedure for the work of collecting information and ascertaining public opinion." It goes without saying that the Commission was expected to examine matters objectively and dispassionately, so that the welfare of the people of each State as well as the nation as a whole was promoted.

The appointment of a States Reorganisation Commission was a remarkable device for continuing the policy of the

Congress Party High Command, while at the same time, representing a middle ground between alternative paths of coercion and complete surrender to provincial sentiments. The Commission represented a "neutral" body that would listen to all demands for reorganisation, demands made on the basis of linguistic and cultural factors as well as those stemming from other considerations. It was constituted under resolution No. 53/69/53 dated 29 December 1953.

The demands for linguistic redistribution of administrative units (States) was not a sudden development. It had a long history of evolution and growth. As such, it is necessary here to give at least an outline of the important stages which culminated in the appointment of the Commission in 1953.

A series of attempts for the implementation of the policy of linguistic provinces was made until a Linguistic Provinces Commission was appointed on 17 June 1948, with S.K. Dar, Judge of the Allahabad High Court as Chairman and Pannalal and Jagatnarain Lal as members. Their finding was that formation of provinces based exclusively or mainly on linguistic considerations was not in the larger interests of the country and as such should not be taken in hand, until the future of Indian States had been more clearly determined and Indian nationality was well established.

In the manifesto of the Congress issued before the first general elections (1951-52), it was specified that a decision on the question of re-arrangement of States on the basis of linguistic consideration, depended on the wishes of the people and the agreed wishes of the concerned parties. The Government's disinterest in the matter was evident and the demand for Andhra State became more aggressive. Swami Sitaram, a disciple of Gandhiji, undertook a fast unto death from 16 August 1951, for the formation of Andhra State but he gave it up after thirty-one days. Next was the turn of Potti



Sriramulu, who after fifty-eight days of fast, died on 12 December 1952. The incidents triggered by this sacrifice, forced the Indian Cabinet under Jawaharlal Nehru, within twenty-four hours of the demise of Potti Sriramulu, to decide on the formation of Andhra Pradesh. The first State to be created mainly on linguistic considerations, Andhra Pradesh, was inaugurated by Jawaharlal Nehru himself, on 1 October 1953. On 22 December 1953 the States Reorganisation Commission was constituted with S. Fazil Ali as Chairman, H.N. Kunzru and K.M. Panikkar as members.

Panikkar returned from Cairo on 2 February 1954 to join the Commission. There were a number of important people who reacted to the appointment of the Commission with mixed feelings. It was their apprehension that this might induce all kinds of faddists to put forward schemes and proposals which were likely to leave behind a great deal of bitterness and confusion. There were others who considered the agitation to divide India on the basis of regional languages, a struggle by the castes to assert themselves in India's new political system.

The newly elected leader of the Communist bloc in Lok Sabha, A.K. Gopalan, exultantly described the formation of linguistic provinces as India's most important problem, the communist's number one goal. It was, according to Harrison, a bitter irony that at the very moment when the clamour of contending regions reached its highest pitch since Independence, the exigencies of Indo-Soviet relations compelled the Indian Communists to accept Indian Unity.

1954 has another significance in Panikkar's life : he completed sixty years of age, which according to Hindu tradition is noticed with religious and customary rites. When some enthusiastic persons undertook to initiate steps to observe the event, Panikkar discouraged it. But he did not

object to the presentation of two commemorative volumes, one in English and the other in Malayalam. They contained valuable contributions from eminent publicmen and literary personalities. They were presented to him in July 1956, at a special meeting held at Rajaji Hall in Madras by E.V. Ramaswami Naicker, P. Varadarajulu Naidu and K. Kamaraja Nadar. Receptions were also accorded to Panikkar by some civic bodies in recognition of his eminence in public life.

Kerala Sahitya Parishad, the premier literary association, held its 24th annual session at Thiruvananthapuram in November 1954. Panikkar was invited to be the President of the session. This is extended only to distinguished literary figures as a mark of recognition and honour. In his presidential address, he pointed out that the greatness and richness of a language cannot be measured by its literary riches alone but by its capacity to help in the ordinary day-to-day intercourse of its people in every area of activity. He also pleaded for a common literary organisation for the four South Indian languages.

Panikkar addressed the annual convocation of the Viswabharathi, at Shantiniketan in 1955. After paying tributes to poet Tagore, he said that we should not forget the great truth which the poet had taught us, that "the true tradition of India is one which welcomed, assimilated and made its own, what was best in the culture of other countries." He continued: "Recently a very distinguished friend of mine pressed on the Commission, of which I was a member, that India should be organised on the basis of *Tapovanas*, (forest retreats) of the past, each under a dedicated sage, living a life of contemplation or, as he expressed it, practising simple living and high thinking. I do not know whether at any time, life in India was organised on the basis of forest retreats. In the new India which we are trying to build this doctrine of

past glory and this desire to return to the village, to live a life of alleged simplicity seems altogether inappropriate, for the inheritance that India has stepped into is only partly Hindu and Indian. The inheritance from the West is no less important in many fields".

During the first few months, the Commission spent most of its time in finalising the methodology and studying various, important aspects of the problem. They finalised plans to visit places for an on-the-spot study, heard views of individuals and organisations, receiving representations, etc., on the subject. They started this programme with a visit to Kerala in May 1954, from where they went to Madras, Bombay and other places.

Panikkar was invited to be one of the persons to assist in the preparation of the History of Mankind under the auspices of the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO). The decision to prepare this monumental work was taken in the UNESCO's seventh General Conference held in Paris in December 1952.

On return from Paris, Panikkar joined his colleagues in the States Reorganisation Commission, to complete their report.

The headlines in newspapers during the last week of September 1955, underlined the major recommendations of the report, at least three weeks before it was officially released on 10 October 1955.

Panikkar submitted a note on Uttar Pradesh, as according to him, the position of that State in the Union of India was such that no one interested in the reorganisation of States could legitimately overlook. In population U.P. was nearly equal to Andhra, Telengana, Karnataka and Kerala put together, larger than the combined population of the Punjab,



Rajasthan and the new Madhya Pradesh. The imbalance created by the existence of a State of this size in a federation was fairly obvious. Panikkar considered it essential for the successful working of federation, that the units should be fairly evenly balanced. Too great a disparity was likely to create not only suspicion and resentment but generate forces likely to undermine the federal structure itself and thereby be a danger to the Unity of India'. Panikkar's fear was that the preponderant influence which would accrue to a very large unit, could be abused and would, in any case, be resented by all other constituent units. He indicated that not only in the Southern States but also in the Punjab, Bengal and elsewhere, the view was generally expressed that the existing structure of the Government led to the dominance of U.P. in all-India matters. The only remedy, he emphasised, was to reconstitute the overgrown State in such a manner as to lessen the differences, in short to partition the State, which seemed to him to be an obvious proposition.

This note of 30 September 1955, angered some very influential people in U.P., especially Govind Vallabh Pant. The Congress and the Government of India were expected to bow to Pant's wishes, though there were a sizable number in U.P. itself, who agreed with Panikkar's views. Almost the whole of Uttar Pradesh was roused against Panikkar. Pant reacted with anger and said that "nobody could divide the land of Ram and Bhim."

President Rajendra Prasad was inclined to sympathise with the demand for a separate Vidarbha. He also visualised U.P. to be bifurcated, even if giving shape to its eastern part involved some give and take with Bihar. When Panikkar called on him and explained the *raison d'être* behind his proposal to tag a part of U.P. with parts of Madhya Bharat, Prasad felt quite convinced of the correctness of Panikkar's



stand. Panikkar said the representatives of U.P. betrayed their own case, when they appeared before S.R.C. to plead for retention of their boundaries.

Panikkar has recorded how some of his friends advised him that his arguing for a division of U.P. would be unpalatable to the Congress High Command and the Union Cabinet, and it might even prejudice his career. According to him, they were right. However, on a matter of such national importance, he was not prepared to suppress his convictions out of self interest.

Even as early as 1942, Panikkar expressed his preference for small States and was unhappy that very few people appreciated the value of political units of convenient size. This is easily forgotten in a world impressed by immensity. He was sure that small States to serve a useful purpose and will be of great value to the diversified life of the motherland.

With the Constitution (Seventh) Amendment Act coming into force on 1 November, 1956, new States were established leaving only one Princely State untouched. All the others passed into history. It may, indeed, sound as an irony of fate that the person who started his real career in the Service of States spread over a period of more than twenty years of active working life, proved to be instrumental in the elimination of the very system from the political map of the country. The flames of regional agitations for linguistic States slowly died down substantially. But the embers lying hidden were destined to ignite new fires in some other areas later. As Toynbee has stated, "While the linguistic nationalism is a disintegrating force, it is a fair price India has to pay for the introduction of democracy. In a country of 440 million, if we really want to reach these millions through administration and through educations, we have to give the fullest scope to these languages".

Even during the period of his stay in India for the States Reorganisation Commission, Panikkar published some books in English and in Malayalam. *In Two Chinas* was a personal view of the happenings in China during his service there. As noted in its Foreword, no attempt was made to give a connected history of the period between 1948-52, when he was successively Ambassador to the Kuomintang Government in Nanking and later to the Peoples Republic of China in Peking.

The other book deals with the challenges faced by Hindu Society with the advent of freedom, after prolonged struggle against foreign domination. This challenge is something which it had not faced in history. It is the authority of the national State armed with plenary legislative powers and motivated by a desire to bring Hindu Institutions in step with new ideas. Once this movement starts, it cannot stop. According to Panikkar, it would help to establish Hinduism in its position of honour among the religions of the world.

*Geographical Factors in Indian History* gives a new dimension to the study of Indian history. The author has shown that both the internal policies and its external relations are governed largely by unalterable geographical conditions and their relationship in space to other countries. He was sure that India's history could only be understood if we realised that it is a perpetual struggle to achieve harmony between the Gangetic plain and the Deccan.

His contributions to Malayalam also deserve mention. A short poem on Ambapali, who became the first *bhikshuni* to be accepted into the rank of monks, was composed during his stay in Delhi. The world was observing the 2500th anniversary of the birth of the Buddha and he thought it appropriate to release the book *Ambapali* at that time. Another work, written on the autobiographical pattern, was

on the life of Rani Lakshmibai of Jhansi, under the title *Rani Jhansiyude Aatmakatha*. This was written to commemorate the 1857 revolt as a part of the centenary celebrations. This story is told in the form of reminiscences as told by the Queen herself. At the instance of Mahakavi G. Sankara Kurup, Panikkar undertook to translate the Greek tragedy, *Electra* of Sophocles. It is amazing that it was done while the report of the Commission was under preparation. It may also be mentioned that Panikkar wrote a valuable and scholarly Introduction to Vallathol Narayana Menon's magnum opus *Rig Vedam* in Malayalam translation. The Kerala Kala Mandalam, an institution Mahakavi Vallathol founded for the revival of Kathakali and Kerala arts, celebrated its Silver Jubilee with Jawaharlal Nehru as the chief guest. The function held on 26 December 1955, was inaugurated by Nehru when Panikkar presided.

Concluding his speech inaugurating the celebrations, Jawaharlal Nehru said — "The great languages of India are mostly allied. Even Malayalam language because of its contact with Sanskrit, is closely allied to many North Indian languages. I think every Indian should know two or three languages, apart from learning some foreign language. All this exuberance that has come over literature and in various arts is to be welcomed."

Panikkar was invited by the University of Baroda to give the Maharaja Sayiji Rao Memorial lecture in 1956. The topic on which he spoke — *India and China* — a study in Cultural relations, was later published in book form under the same title by the Asia Publishing House, Bombay (1957). In these lectures, he attempted to clear the way for scholars to have at least a glimpse of the thousand years of contact between India and China that constitute one of the central facts of Asian history.



After the work in the States Reorganisation Commission was over, Panikkar was informed that he would be posted to Paris as India's Ambassador. This was as per his desire, as he indicated his preference to the persons concerned. His posting was to take place in October 1956. There was yet a lot of time at his disposal, as it was in March that his services with the Commission came to a close. He went to Europe to take up the planning and writing assignment of *History of Mankind*, with the co-editors, Caroline Ware and Jan Romein at Amsterdam. While this work was being done, Panikkar began his translation into Malayalam of *Oedipus* of Sophocles. Most of it was completed later at a holiday resort on the Carpathian mountains. While his companions spent time in mountaineering, Panikkar discovered adventure in-doors in the translation of the Greek classic.

He went to England and spent a few days in London doing some "pot boilers" —writing for some journals such as *Commonwealth*, *Manchester Guardian*, etc., and also some B.B.C. broadcasts. He stayed at Oxford in his old College, Christ Church, while preparing drafts for *History of Mankind*. One incident during this time was an unexpected meeting with Harry S. Truman, former President of U.S.A. He came there to accept an honorary Doctorate in Civil Law. Of this meeting, this is what Panikkar has recorded:

"He (Truman) was President (of USA) at the time of the Korean War, and in his memoirs, where he deals with the war, there is a paragraph in which he was critical about me. Lord Cherwell introducing me mentioned that the reports about China's intentions (at that time) were sent by me. Truman sat near me during the dinner and I noticed, he looked at me more than once. After dinner and after talking to many people, he approached me and asked — 'So, you were in China during the Korean War?'



‘Yes’

‘I remember, I was a little hard on you in my book, wasn’t I? Think nothing of it. One doesn’t always have all facts in these matters’.”

As a person deeply interested in literary activities, Panikkar was happy, his services were utilised for India’s Sahitya Akademi from its inception. The genesis of the idea to have a National Academy of Letters can be traced to the principle accepted by the Government of India, three years before independence, in 1944. It was a recommendation of the Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal. But the Academy was organised only after India attained its freedom. This was, indeed, the first organised effort by the Government to provide encouragement to literatures in Indian Languages.

A Committee was appointed with Dr. Radhakrishnan, Panikkar, Humayun Kabir and Jainendra Kumar to consider and recommend suitable proposals to ensure wider representation of literateurs and others in its general council and set-up. Their proposals were accepted and Sahitya Akademi was registered under the Societies Registration Act, 1860. The seven members, who signed the documents, included Jawaharlal Nehru, S. Radhakrishnan, Abdul Kalam Azad and K.M. Panikkar, among others. Panikkar was appointed by the Executive Board of the Akademi as a member of a special committee to review the procedure to select books for awards given by the Akademi. Its chairman was C.D. Deshmukh.

There is an interesting episode about the translation project into Malayalam of Voltaire’s *Candide* which Panikkar agreed to do in 1956. On second thoughts, it appears he considered it extremely unsuitable for publication in Malayalam though it was one of the great world classics. “In view of our

Government's attitude towards books involving religious controversies, e.g., *Story of Rama Retold*, it may even lead to a book of the Akademi being suppressed and confiscated by the Government". Panikkar's argument was that the Catholics in Kerala may resent the various incidents alluded to in the book. Dr. Radhakrishnan did not agree with this view as the author of *Candide* has attacked forms of Catholic Church and not necessarily Christian religion in general. Jawaharlal Nehru also agreed with Radhakrishnan. Panikkar was not aware of the fact that the book had been rendered into Malayalam by A. Madhavan about ten years earlier.

The Kerala Sahitya Akademi came into being on 15 August 1956, and Panikkar was invited to be its founder President. Subsequently, after the formation of Kerala State as a result of States Reorganisation Commission's recommendations as implemented by the Seventh Constitutional Amendment, the Akademi was expanded to include members from other areas of Kerala. Mahakavi Vallathol was Vice-President with K.P. Kesava Menon as working President. Most of Panikkar's suggestions for planned and meaningful effort for encouragement to literary endeavour were accepted by the Akademi. One of Panikkar's life-long ambitions was to make a contribution to Malayalam literature. He felt highly delighted when he was given the prestigious position of the president of the Akademi. This was the first ever attempt in Kerala's history, at an organised effort by creative writers, to ensure a place for Malayalam in the forefront of regional languages of India. Panikkar went back to New Delhi to get ready to take up his new assignment in Paris in November 1956.

## PARIS

**P**ANIKKAR assumed responsibilities of Ambassador of India to France on 2 December 1956. He had an admiration for Paris from early days and had not only visited the city several times, but also stayed there long for specific reasons.

In France, after the general elections held on 2 January 1956, M. Guy Mollet came to power on 31 January. His Government signed a protocol on 20 March 1956, recognising the independence of Morocco, subject to France's right in the spheres of foreign affairs, security and defence. India welcomed this step and the Prime Minister said in the Lok Sabha that India appreciated and welcomed the steps to restore sovereignty to Morocco and Tunisia. But the difficult problem of Algeria remained unsolved. On 5 June 1956, V.K. Krishna Menon, at that time Minister without portfolio, discussed with the French Prime Minister, M. Mollet, a five-point proposal, but no practical solutions were found.

An event of far-reaching consequence was the nationalisation of the Suez Canal by Egypt on 26 July 1956. The French Prime Minister, characterised Nasser "an apprentice dictator" and stated that "an energetic and severe counter strike by Western allies will provide a fitting answer for this act of plunder". India felt that it was a grave crisis which, if not resolved peacefully, can lead to a conflict, the extent and effects of which it is not easy to assess. On 23 August V.K. Krishna Menon presented a proposal, "a carpet on which the Western side and Egypt could walk and meet".

Nothing helped to avert the "Suez fiasco". It may be mentioned that Britain's course of action leading to the attack on Egypt was worked out with France; Commonwealth countries were merely informed of the decision.

Panikkar's assessment at the time he took over as Ambassador was that apart from the Algerian war, three other factors seemed to hold the key to the future of France. The first was the proposed European Economic Community made up of France, Germany and Italy, along with the Benelux countries (i.e., Belgium, the Netherlands and Luxemburg). When and if the Community ever took shape, Western Europe would match Russia and America in the councils of the world. But the initiative and leadership for such a community had to come only from France. If France were to lead such a United Europe, the ancient hostility between France and Germany had to be overcome. This was the second factor. France needed a leader who could seek a *detente* with Germany and thus assume the leadership of Europe. The third factor was a question mark; how the North African Empire of France, which covered nearly one-third of the land area of the Continent, could be fitted into the scheme of a United Europe? These three factors seemed to him to hold the key to France's future and the question was, who would be able to find the key?

The opportunity came to Panikkar to meet the leaders of the Benelux countries, when they assembled in Paris for the first meeting of the consultative Inter-Parliamentary Benelux Council, on 22 February 1957. He had known some of them before and had established excellent contacts. He met General de Gaulle for the first time in his Paris Office, along with the Counsellor Goburdhan who was very good at French. "We talked for an hour", wrote Panikkar about the meeting, "and it seemed to me that his opinions had been formed out of long and serious reflection and could not be altered by anyone. I felt certain about one thing. If France were to continue on the same road, she should soon face a crisis and then de Gaulle would come back to power." Panikkar has also stated that this statement was not a matter



of hind sight, but was what he wrote to Government of India at that time.

The results of the second general elections in India were officially published on 5 April 1957. A new government, the third Ministry since Independence, with Jawaharlal Nehru as Prime Minister, took office on 17 April 1957. V.K. Krishna Menon became Defence Minister. He was also associated with the Ministry of External Affairs.

According to Panikkar, the Paris Embassy was a comparatively easy post. His main concern was to arrange for purchase of heavy arms and military aircraft, which was done by specialists. In the field of commerce he was to have an overall view of matters. A considerable part of his activities outside was devoted to subjects relating to the UNESCO, the headquarters of which was in Paris. One project in which Panikkar functioned as Chairman was the Cultural Exchange Programme between countries. The Institute d'Etude de Developpement Economique et Social of the Sorbonne, honoured him with an invitation to deliver six talks on problems of the newly independent States of Asia and Africa. In these lectures, he covered the period 1945-57, during which time these States became free and became members of the international community. He mentioned in the Introduction to the book which incorporated these talks, that "the bomb that fell at Hiroshima not only sounded the deathknell of an age but proclaimed a new era in world history, which had been shaping during the previous half century. In 1957 also he gave a series of lectures on *Cultural Contact between India and the West*, which were published in French translation.

Major political and constitutional advance had already taken place in French overseas territories with the legislation passed by the National Assembly on 23 March 1956, which

was slightly modified and put into effect on 19 June the same year.

With the resignation of M. Guy Mollet on 21 May 1957, events slowly but surely were shaping inevitably to the recall of General de Gaulle to assume power for saving the French nation from civil war.

A holiday motor-tour took Panikkar and family through most of the European countries — Germany, Czechoslovakia, Austria, Hungary and Italy. They visited the Titos on 18 October 1957, at Brioni, "Tito lived in the style of our own Maharajas", Panikkar has recorded. "There was no one else in the island. The island was a park filled with exotic vegetation and imported fauna and birds. Brioni reminded me of the Bikaner Maharaja's retreat at Gajaner. In a palace on this island, the communist leader lived in regal splendour. He wore an expensive ring. Mme. Tito was dressed in the latest Parisian fashion. My wife and I were surprised by this way of living and in fact my wife used to refer to him thereafter, as "Tito Maharajah". They returned via Venice and Milan.

An agreement for economic and technical cooperation between India and France was signed in Delhi on 23 January 1958. It was to facilitate financing of the manufacture and delivery by French suppliers of capital goods required under projects taken up in the Second Five Year Plan. Provision was made to make available highly qualified French technical experts and also to institute scholarships to Indian engineering students for study in France.

The General was given on 1 June 1958, a *vote d'investiture* of full powers for six months, with the directive that "the Government will take necessary means for the rehabilitation of the nation." He announced his Cabinet the next day which was a national coalition of parties, except the Communists and the Poujadists.

Panikkar called on Prime Minister, de Gaulle on 29 July and had a long talk with him on matters of common interest. This was his first meeting after de Gaulle's return to power. The Fifth Republic came into existence on 6 October 1958.

Panikkar met de Gaulle several times afterwards. According to him, de Gaulle did not forget the fact that Panikkar had sought him out when he was in political wilderness many months before. When Vijayalakshmi Pandit came to visit, Panikkar called the President's Secretary and arranged for her a meeting with de Gaulle. Vijayalakshmi Pandit was at that time India's High Commissioner in London. Andre Malraux, Minister-delegate to the *Presidence du Conseil* gives an account of the visit: "The relations between India and France were about to change. Mrs. Pandit, Nehru's sister, Ambassador in Britain, was returning to India via Paris. She came to the Elysée accompanied by the Indian Ambassador to Paris, Sardar Panikkar, a little man with a goatee beard and pince-nez, anti-European, full of shrewd or chimerical ideas, who reminds one of a cross between Lenin and Tartarin. After a few words of welcome, General de Gaulle asked Mrs. Pandit for her views on Chinese foreign policy. Panikkar had represented India in Peking and Mrs. Pandit, who is courtesy itself, (and who was not, perhaps, displeased to remain an observer for a minute or two) turned towards him. He began to lecture on China which contributed to nothing.... Time passed when an aide came to announce the Ambassador of the United States. Neither Pandit nor General de Gaulle had been able to get a word."

In April 1959, Panikkar had a two-day programme of lectures at Munich. After the engagement, he returned on 8th. The subsequent events are better narrated in his own words: "I returned with every satisfaction. In fact, our Ambassador in Germany, Badruddin Tyabji, met me the evening I returned

and we were talking for about one hour. When leaving he said, 'I have never seen you in such excellent health, congratulations'! I went to bed that night with this in mind. But when I woke up next morning, I had suffered a stroke and could not get up." Panikkar was confined to hospital for over a week by which time, due to the best medical care he received, he improved substantially. But the person who got up from the hospital bed was not the same man. He was advised not to do anything unusually strenuous and restrict his activities. He resigned his job and returned home by sea.

Panikkar underwent extensive medical treatment. He spent about the entire October in Trichur for the traditional Ayurvedic treatment under the supervision and care of a reputed physician, Kuttamcheri Moosse. Panikkar was convinced that it was time to think seriously, of a life of retirement. It was really difficult for a man like him to reconcile himself to this harsh truth. The sad predicament reverberates in the question he poses in his autobiography:—"Once reading and writing are ruled out, what is left for a man like me?" But he did not give up. He salvaged all that was possible and continued to be happy and as active as possible, though he found difficulty in regaining the alertness of memory and power of concentration which he was once known.



## THE LAST PHASE

**P**ANIKKAR'S *Vanaprastham* started with his nomination to the Rajya Sabha on 27 August 1959. A vacant seat became available on Dr. Satyendranath Bose's appointment as a National Professor. Panikkar used to participate in the Rajya Sabha on such occasions when he had specific ideas and opinions to contribute. After paying tributes, for the exhaustive, comprehensive and lucid 14th report of the Law Commission (Judicial Reform), he spoke on the relationship between the Executive and the Judiciary. He was sure that this was a matter of the highest importance to the whole of India. "There is no country in the world, where the executive does not appoint the Judiciary. In England, it is the Lord Chancellor, who is a member of the Cabinet and also the head of the Judiciary, that recommend to the King about the appointment of Judges. In America, the President appoints Federal Court Judges.... So the idea that the Executive has no interest in the appointment of the Judiciary or that the Judiciary is so independent and so separate as to be in a compartment by itself, is something which does not seem to be justified from any point of view... It is time that we realised that in a country like India, it is not possible to rule out considerations of areas, regions and communities".

On the re-employment in other areas of retired Judges, Panikkar made the following observation: "It is said, these Judges would look forward to such appointments and so their views would be coloured by possibilities of Government patronage. I do not think such a prohibition exists in any other country. It does not exist in England. To mention only one case, do we not all know how one famous Viceroy, Lord Reading, was at one time the Lord Chief Justice of England? From that capacity, he came to be the Viceroy of India and

became later even Foreign Secretary. There is also the instance of Lord Macmillan and there are many others.... I remember Justice Sankaran Nair from Madras elevated to the Executive Council in Delhi. There were other instances also. Can the Government be separated from the Judiciary to that extent as to consider them in separate compartments? I believe that is not possible. All that we can ensure is that the best class of people should be selected as Judges and there should be no interference". This debate was held on 24 November 1959. In another one, on 8 December the same year, the members took up India-China relations, when White Paper No. 11 was presented to the House. It was a long and indepth examination by members, concerning the policy so far followed by India towards China. Panikkar also made a long speech on this vital issue, as he had a role in the shaping of the policy in the early stages. "The issue to-day is not merely to settle this problem from the point of view of justice and honour but also to consider that for the future we have to live with a country which is undoubtedly power-conscious, one from which we cannot run away".

The same month Panikkar spoke on the Dowry Prohibition Bill. After expressing his views about this social problem, Panikkar said: "The Law Minister himself has stated that it is difficult of enforcement and that the very circumstances of the Bill and the evil to be remedied make it almost impossible to bring evidence before Court and assure conviction... The great prestige of law and legislation is that, legislation should be respected by the people and that they must be afraid of punishment that is meted out to them and that it is not merely the enunciating of a principle to be accepted as a pious thing by the people but that people should realise that if they did not follow that, Government was vigilant and would take necessary action." He was of the view that dowry becomes

serious and morally undesirable only when an element of blackmail and coercion enters into it.

In the debate on the motion of thanks to the President for his address, Panikkar laid stress on three topics: corruption in high places, private capital and exploitation of oil resources and failure of educational policy at the national level. He was of the view that Parliament may create any authority within its own body to enquire into any corruption, any kind of mischief, or any kind of mistake made. "But let us not make the mistake of creating Macarthy bodies in this country. Whenever there is a necessity, a Tribunal can be created." He was totally against this idea of a permanent Tribunal to investigate corruption charges. On the failure of educational policy, he stated: "The breakdown of the educational system should be considered responsible for the breakdown of discipline of our students and this is a major issue. Unless national importance is attached to it and unless we go to the root of the problem, this will not be solved. We must go into it at a national level."

Panikkar took up the Vice-Chancellorship of Jammu & Kashmir University when it was established. But this period was not of much significance so far as his life was concerned. The only productive indications are the publication of a few books, most of which were compilations of lectures he gave on various occasions. Mention has also been made of *The Afro-Asian States and Their Problems*. From Indonesia to Morocco on the Atlantic coast, a new community of Asian and African nations had been liberated from their tutelage, between 1945-57. The contents of this book mainly discuss their problems in a dispassionate manner. His other work, *A History of Kerala*, was a three volume book: *Malabar and the Portugueses*, *Malabar and the Dutch* and *Mysorean Invasion of Kerala*. During this period Panikkar found time to associate



himself with A. Pershad to edit selected speeches of Motilal Nehru. As the *Times* reviewer has mentioned, "excellent but unobtrusive notes recall the occasions for each speech or circumstances of it." The selected speeches were published under the title *Voice of Freedom*. Three lectures delivered by Panikkar, under Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan's annual Birla Endowment Scheme, on Indian History, formed the content of the volume, *The Determining Periods of Indian History*. On the concept of *Bharathavarsh*, Panikkar has sated: "India as an entity was not the only political inheritance of the period of Nanda-Mauryan hegemony. A political and administrative system which was evolved in Magadha became part of the Indian tradition. What is so significant and what makes this a decisive period in Indian history, is the penetration of Aryan religious, social, legal and domestic institutions to the South." There are six lectures included in *In Defence of Liberalism*. Panikkar's acute intelligence and wide reading enabled him to analyse the essential principles of liberal outlook and to estimate the practical difficulties which confront the outlook of today's world. The exposition is learned, judicious and garnished with many interesting comments.

Another very interesting book is *The Himalayas in Indian Life* (1963). The author has declared that "there is no mountain-range anywhere in the world which has contributed so much to shape the life of a country, as the Himalayas have, in respect of India. It is not only the political life of the people of Hindustan but the religion, mythology, art and literature of the Hindus that bear the imprint of the great mountain barrier." *Studies in Indian History* deals with aspects of India's influence and impact on ancient Europe, Western Asia and Europe of the Middle Ages, and China and the East. Panikkar has pointed out that India's failure to provide a record of her contact with the outside world is one of the tragic facts of our history. The lectures on 'Impact of Indian



Culture on China', 'Civil Service in History' were delivered by Panikkar in the Universities of Baroda and Madras respectively. He has given an excellent assessment of Vatsyayan's *Kamasutra*, and has pointed out that essentially it is not an erotic work. To the Hindus, it was important and necessary to approach the study of this subject with reverence and objectivity and not to treat it as something obscene and secret.

The Vice-Chancellorship of the University of Mysore was vacant for sometime and a search was on to identify and persuade a distinguished scholar-cum-public figure to accept it. The Chief Minister of Karnataka, S. Nijalingappa's persuasion and pressure won over Panikkar for Mysore. Panikkar was relieved from J & K University by the Chancellor, Dr. Karan Singh and the arrangement was for the Chief Minister Bakshi Ghulam Mohammed to temporarily hold charge of it. Panikkar left J & K on 20 June 1963, and joined Mysore on 1 July. Mohamed Rahmatoola, the Secretary of the Education department, was holding charge on a temporary basis till Panikkar took over from him. About Panikkar's appointment, Dr. C.D. Narasimhiah has this comment:

It happens that the key post of Vice-Chancellor of a University is usually annexed by a person who is adept in the manipulation of political pressure groups to his advantage. In most cases, it is a place where people with political patronage feather their nest. As a result, a position which has a halo of greatness, where respect and recognition is willingly given, has fallen into disrepute. The tradition set by men dedicated to scholarship and discipline is lost in the din and bustle of day-to-day politics. This was the prevailing situation in Karnataka too, till Panikkar assumed charge of the Vice-Chancellorship of the University of Mysore. He had the qualities that go to make an ideal head of a University. He

was unconventional in his outlook and was happy to gather lively minds capable of facing the challenges of a new age. About Panikkar's unconventional method, here is a personal experience narrated by Dr. C.D. Narasimhiah who himself is a reputed author and professor:

After a quick acquaintance with Departments of the University in his own manner, Vice-Chancellor Panikkar telephoned to me, a total stranger, 'to help to resolve the tangle in your Department'.

'Could I come to see you for a minute?'

'Yes' — and he meant business — 'You see you are a Professor and head of the Department; but not in the U.G.C. Scheme, while the Reader is, and this has placed the University in an awkward position regarding headship of the Department. Suppose we asked you to be the U.G.C. Professor, would you decline? I shall fix your salary at the maximum in the grade'.

'But, I haven't applied' — I had not made an application and that was the bone of contention.

'I know you have not applied and I have no doubt you must not apply', asserted Panikkar.

One was not used to such civilised gestures in the University and I was overwhelmed. Orders were issued the same afternoon, though the Registrar, an academic to boot, sought to wreck it with his bureaucratic tactics!

On discipline and decorum, he never relented. In one academic meeting a public man, elected member of the University Council, therefore *ex-officio* at this meeting, tried to assert himself by raising irrelevant issues, not listed on the agenda.

'My friend!' — said the Vice-Chancellor, half in condescension, half in annoyance, 'bring it up in the form of a resolution, observing all the proprieties, the Chair will consider it. You can't waste the time of the house and obstruct its proceedings.'

The rebel member was cut to size and it was clear from his performance afterwards, he had learnt to behave!

Prof. Narasimhiah's reminiscences include two instances as to how Panikkar respected others' views, even if his personal assessment did not always agree.

Once my conversation veered round to Raja Rao, against whom Panikkar had his own prejudices, based apparently on their personal relationship in France. And he spoke condescendingly, even slightly, of Raja Rao. I had my ground and made him realise my concern was with the creative writer and I didn't like to import extraneous considerations into it. He (Panikkar) didn't like to be thought of as being narrow and intellectually intolerant and so it was his turn to ask, if Raja Rao was in India and when the reply was in the affirmative, to make a gesture: would I like to invite him for a talk in the University? If I had said 'no' in a huff, it wasn't the Vice-Chancellor's fault; he played his role becomingly.

The last meeting was the saddest I had. A friend of his, Amiya Chakravathy, a distinguished Bengali poet living in America for long, had come to Mysore for a lecture in the University. Panikkar was indisposed, but insisted on being present at the lecture. He took the chair himself. Half way through the lecture, he must have felt restless and so looked in my direction in the audience, intently and in embarrassment. I tried to avoid his eye and so he beckoned to me.

I went near him to be told — 'You take the Chair, I think I have a heart attack.' He got up and I tried to help him get down the steps. As though offended, such was his dignity and self-reliance, he walked down the steps across the hall to the door and then to his waiting car, never to see us after.

The meeting was held on that fateful day in Maharaja's College, Mysore. He went directly home, and was later rushed to Krishnarajendra Hospital, where he passed away at 5 P.M., the same day, 10 December 1963. It was shocking news not only for his friends but to the world where scholarship and dedication to literature are valued and respected.

Panikkar's students insisted on carrying the cortege on their shoulders, by turns, along the main city streets to the graveyard.

Panikkar is today a legend in the University for his exemplary functioning as Vice-Chancellor. And one has heard, as Dr. Narasimhiah has stated, a teacher, student and friend of University sigh with nostalgia - "Will we ever see one like Panikkar as Vice-Chancellor?"

Panikkar was survived by his wife, four daughters and a son.

Statesman, diplomat, historian, educationist, literateur—Panikkar was a many-sided personality with a wide range of interests, as some personality of Italian Renaissance. He was unique in that he had an established reputation as a novelist, poet, essayist and dramatist in Malayalam, his mother tongue. His pen is equally facile in communicating his rich erudition and ideas to elevate and enlighten his reader, whether in English or in Malayalam. There are a number of eminent men from Kerala who can match or even excel his reputation as authors in English. But there are none in that group who can claim a contribution that can compare with his in Malayalam. One of his ambitions was to enrich his mother tongue by substantial original contributions of merit. Wherever he was, whether at Oxford, Paris, Peking or Cairo or Delhi, he set apart a part of his day's time for his mother tongue, either for writing or reading. His tight, serious, official engagements never impinged upon this time. It was this habit that enabled him to produce about four dozens of popular books of various categories in Malayalam.

As a popular historian, he had few rivals. What are the general principles that go into making a good work on history? Some of his ideas are expressed in a short article on



"Nehru as a Historian". He says: "While research can provide historians with materials, the qualities necessary to make history a source of inspiration and convey to others the spirit of a Nation's story, are not the one generally found in those who devote themselves to the study of meticulous details of some selected incident or period. It is not the pure researchers who have produced historical literature of high value, but men of affairs who have themselves played some part in the life of their country.... In fact, to give life to history and convey to the readers the spirit of historical evolution, it would seem that experience of public affairs is in some degree essential. The material used by a historian has, no doubt, to come from what others have collected. In this matter, he is like an artist who knows the qualities of the paints he uses and how to mix them, but does not himself produce paints or manufacture the canvas". Panikkar had the same theme and elaborated it while addressing the concluding session of the first Asian History Congress held in December 1961, in New Delhi: "As you all know, history is in many ways contemporaneous. Every generation has some key ideas in terms of which history has to be interpreted. Interpretation of Asian history has to be in terms of the new ideas of the 20th century. You have to think of two different approaches. One is that of research and the other the interpretation of history."

The relationship between literature and history is clearly an intimate one. Literature is particularly important in spreading ideas and images about things which are unfamiliar to the general reading public, thus helping to shape opinion and, through it, policy. Panikkar's novels in Malayalam have a historical backdrop. *Kalyanamal* is the story of a young Rajput couple overcoming the machinations of Mughal nobles of Akbar's times. *Kerala Simham* deals mainly with the patriotic fight against English dominance of Malabar by

Pazhassiraja, a prince of a small principality in Malabar. We raised the banner of revolt against the British represented by Commander Wellesley (who later became Duke of Wellington). *Jhansi Raniyude Aatmakatha* is based on the tragic story of Ahalyabhai, who fought against the British in 1857. As Panikkar observes, "The true story of India during British period does not consist of the activities of East India Company or its successors, the British crown, but the upheaval which led to the transformation of Indian Society through the activities of India's own sons. Brought up on text-books written by foreigners whose one object would seem to have been to prove that there was no such thing as united India before their arrival, we had each to discover India for ourselves".

History, as European writers had conceived it, was Europe-centred. Civilization, it was alleged, arose on the shores of the Aegean and blossomed first in Greece. It was taken to the east by Alexander. Through Rome, it spread and took roots in Europe. Civilization, according to most European historians and the dominant school of thinking in the West, is a European manifestation which spread to the rest of the world in the 19th Century, through political dominance by Europe. The existence of contemporary non-European civilizations—Islamic, Chinese and Indian—was either overlooked or dismissed as being stunted growths, which ceased to have value when Western civilization flowered into full majesty in the 19th Century as world civilization. This approach of history was almost universal. This meant a depreciation of values of other civilizations and the creation of a myth of European superiority. As Prof. Okakura, the eminent Japanese author, has stated, "the children of the Hoang Ho and the Ganges had from early days, evolved a culture comparable with the era of the highest enlightenment in Greece and Rome, one which foreshadowed the trend of

advanced thoughts in modern Europe". But these were ignored by the West.

Panikkar's historical writings are mostly reactions to the highly biased books of Westerners. The first attempt made by him to disprove the belief held by such scholars that India had no naval tradition, can be seen in his *India and the Indian Ocean* (1945). He tried to examine not only the part India played in navigation and the control of the oceanic areas, and the effects of the control of the Indian seas by European nations, but also the problems likely to arise in the future.

*Origin and Evolution of Kingship in India* (1938) was to dispel the idea that politics did not form a subject of serious study among the Hindus. The thesis in his lectures delivered in 1961 and later published under the title *Determining Periods of Indian History* (1963) was the continuity of the Hindu Unity since the time of their first integration.

Lee Warner's book on Princely States, mainly provoked his writings on the same subject, to give better objectivity to the topic. *The Indian States and the Government of India* (1932), *Inter Statal Law* (1934), *Indian States* (1942), etc., come under this category. He wrote against the European colonialist viewpoint in *Survey of Indian History* (1947) and *Asia and Western Dominance* (1953). This has been pointed out by Prof. Warder, Professor of Sanskrit and Chairman of the Department of East Asian Studies, University of Toronto, Canada.

Recognition from the Orthodox scholars came to Panikkar, the historian, when he was invited to preside over the Indian Historical Congress at Calcutta in 1955. In his Presidential address, he stressed one essential point that is relevant here: "I would only make one appeal to Indian historians and that is, not lend themselves to the heresy of elevating regional



glories as a result of their specialisation with certain periods or certain areas. Every region in India has contributed to the evolution of the Indian people, every group added to our common heritage. Every part of India has its heroic period, and forgetting this, the historians have often contributed to the false pride, resulting from glorified self-image of different areas. This is a most dangerous development, which the historian has especially to guard against."

Panikkar was one of the pioneers to discuss seriously the problem relating to India's defence. Those who thought about this subject did not give the navy the attention it deserved. As he has mentioned, "There has been a tendency to overlook the sea in the discussion of India's defence problems. Of the three ancient problems who had a long naval tradition, the Hindus had a major share till the end of the 13th century." About the battles that decided the European mastery of the Eastern seas, Panikkar has this to say: "Judged from the results, the battles off Cochin in 1503 and the engagement of Dieu in 1509, are two significant events in Indian History. The first action showed to the Portuguese the weakness of Indian navies, and afforded them the opportunities for building up a naval empire. The second left them free to pursue any oceanic policy they desired and laid the firm foundation of European mastery of the Eastern areas, which continued for over four hundred years. While to other countries, Indian ocean is only one of the important ocean areas, to India it is a vital sea. Her life lines are concentrated in that area. Her future is dependent on the freedom of that vast water surface. No industrial development, no commercial growth, no stable political structure is possible for her, unless the Indian Ocean is free and her own shores are fully protected. The Indian Ocean must, therefore, remain truly Indian." Our persistent efforts to keep the Indian Ocean a zone of peace, are the result of the acceptance of the fact



forcefully projected by Panikkar as early as about forty-five years ago, in a slender book, *India and the Indian Ocean*.

*Panchasheel* is an old Sanskrit phrase. It was revived by President Sukarno when he gave a similar name *Pantjasila* to the five principles on which the Indonesian State is founded: (1) Belief in god, (2) Sovereignty of the people, (3) Nationalism (4) Social Justice and (5) Humanity and belief in equality of men. These are not the same as the five principles embodied in the Sino-Indian agreement on Tibet of 20 April 1954. It was Panikkar who suggested to Nehru that he give the Sanskrit name to the five principles. Nehru liked the idea and made the phrase *Panchasheel* internationally known and widely respected. There is also another expression which is attributed to Panikkar.

There is an ever-growing demand for linguists, especially those adept in foreign languages, for work associated with our Missions abroad. Dependence on foreigners in the matter of translation, assessment, etc., of vital and sensitive information for use by diplomats, should be avoided in our best interest. With the phenomenal growth of our Foreign Service, this became a matter that cannot be ignored. Dr. K.N. Katju and Panikkar recognised our needs and helped to develop our own schools in several foreign languages and also a scheme to depute selected officers to learn languages. Even as early as 1920, in his book on Educational Re-construction of India, Panikkar argued that the present system of Indian education was ineffective and does not help in the great programme of reconstruction. Long before others thought of a common link-language for us other than English, he proposed that Hindustani may be accepted for that purpose.

Reference has already been made of a lecture Panikkar gave at the Harold Laski Institute of Political Science, Ahmedabad, on the strange and melancholy situation of the

studies relating to Political Science in our educational institutions. On that occasion, he said: "The text books which are taught in our Universities and the doctrines that are expounded by our teachers and studied by our students, are unrelated to our own social order and are, generally speaking, foreign to our experience, that I have often wondered whether, as at present constituted, these studies serve any purpose at all. To study Aristotle, Bodin, Hobbes, Rousseau, Green and others may be intellectual discipline, to be familiar with their views may be part of liberal education, to be concerned with such impressive terms as democracy, dictatorship, will of the people and Social Contract, may not be less useful than being engaged in perpetual discussion on metaphysical problems, but no one could pretend that they touch the hard core of power in society." Now there was a time, he said, when India was the home, as it were, of political science and it is the political doctrine that was taught, studied and practised, which should be reinstated in the mind of India today, in order to promote development of independent political thinking related to our social order and institutional structure, which is the basic need of India today. Panikkar's reference was to *Mahabharata*, which he described as that "encyclopedia of Indians' thinking which has long been one instrument of education of the Indian mind and to which in spite of all our familiarity with Western literature and thought, we still return for solution of our problems and to *Arthasastra*, that central text of India's Political Science which enables Hindu thinkers to evolve a purely secular theory of State, of which the sole basis is power." The idea of the State which had been evolved in the context by Kautilya and his successors went, in Panikkar's opinion, far beyond the limited imagination of Machiavelli, for the author of *Arthasastra* thought of State as an organisation which took within the range of interest, every sphere of human activity.

Panikkar had a sharp intellect and his scholarship always lent charm to his personality. As a diplomat, negotiator, and holder of office of distinction in Patiala and Bikaner, he had displayed the astuteness of Chanakya and the worldly prudence of Machiavelli.

Suave, urbane, witty and wise, Kavalam Madhava Panikkar combined many ages and multiplicities of civilization. He could switch from the cliché-ridden, phony courtliness of the diplomat to an academic interpretation of Indian history or to a discussion of the classic poetics of Malayalam without any effort. This mental agility was reflected in his career which took him in unexpected directions. Only he could have been an admirer of Indian Princes as well as a benevolent onlooker of the Chinese revolution and found nothing ludicrous about it. He has been a journalist, courtier, diplomat, educationist, poet, dramatist, political theorist, and wit. His creativity was uneven which is not surprising for one who was so prolific. His outstanding book *Asia and Western Dominance* is a brilliant attempt to explain the effect of politico-socio-interplay between two cultures, two ways of life, a first work of its kind by an Asian. In International Affairs, Panikkar was an old-fashioned geo-politician and his private hero must have been Chanakya. His position in Malayalam letters is shaky. An early satirical poem was popular, but is heavily dated. But his considerable belles-lettres may have a lasting place.









आधुनिक भारत के निर्माता

BUILDERS OF MODERN INDIA

আধুনিক ভারতের স্রষ্টা

আধুনিক ভারতৰ নিৰ্মাতা

આધુનિક ભારતના ધડવૈયા

ಆಧುನಿಕ ಭಾರತದ ನಿರ್ಮಾಪಕರು

आधुनिक भारताचे शिल्पकार

ଆଧୁନିକ ଭାରତର ନିର୍ମାତା

आधुनिक-भारतस्य निर्मातारः

ਨਵ-ਭਾਰਤ ਦੇ ਨਿਰਮਾਤਾ

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